A close-up portrait of Gordon Ramsay with a slight, knowing smile. He has light brown, slightly messy hair and is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt over a white t-shirt. The background is a solid dark blue. On the left side of the frame, there is a vertical strip of several halved, roasted cherry tomatoes, showing their charred edges and juicy interiors.

Gordon Ramsay

Cooking for Friends

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Cook's notes

I suggest seasoning with good-quality sea salt and freshly ground pepper, and using fresh herbs for best flavor.

Cup and spoon measures are level unless otherwise specified.

Use extra-large eggs unless otherwise specified, ideally organic or from cage-free chickens. If you are pregnant or in a vulnerable health group, avoid dishes using raw or lightly cooked eggs.

Oven temperatures and timings are for convection ovens. If using a standard oven, increase the temperatures by 25°F.

Timings are provided as guidelines, with a description of color or texture where appropriate, but readers should rely on their own judgment as to when a dish is properly cooked.



Introduction

As a chef, I work at a thousand miles an hour, but when I'm at home, I want to slow down. I leave my chef's jacket at work, and I walk into a domestic setting, where everything is completely different. At home, our kitchen is family-run, and it's a relaxed place.

A lot of people see cooking as a chore, but we bring an element of fun into it. For me, it's a therapy, and it's happening more and more that I cook with Tana and the children, especially Megan, my oldest. The kitchen is open-plan, with a large sofa and space to unwind. The focus is on the stove, which was built in Paris. It needed a concrete plinth as its foundation, to carry the weight, and after it was installed, the kitchen was built around it. The stove has a chrome-faced, water-cooled frontage so the kids can't burn themselves while they're involved in the food preparation, slicing scallions or grating fresh Parmesan.

I can't sit at home with my feet up, reading the newspaper. But having said that, I am beginning to learn about being calm. Everyone always imagines that it must be hectic in the Ramsays' kitchen, but it's not. We turn cooking into serious fun. To an extent, everything we do is spontaneous. We're very lucky in that we have some great farmers' markets nearby. The kids will go and buy cheese, fresh organic chicken, and a selection of the farmers' vegetables. They become totally involved in the shopping, even putting aside a percentage of their weekly allowance to buy food. They really love that. Have a young child pay for a pound of turnips or carrots, and then see how excited they are about what's on the plate later.



My kids get an allowance according to their age. Megan's nine, so she's on £9. The twins, Holly and Jack, are on £8, and Tilly is on £6. They all wait for their birthdays because they know they'll get a £1 increase.

They are learning that in order to live well and have a healthy lifestyle, they have to eat well. If none of them pursues cooking as a career, that's not going to upset me. I just need to know that they will one day be able to fend for themselves in the kitchen.

The naughtiest child on the day gets to do the dishwashing. Whoever's not on washing-up duty will set the table. We do have a dishwasher, but it's rarely used, unless we have a big party going on in the garden. I think the kids need to know what it's like to wash the dishes.

When I was a child, we had a cleaning rota at home. I didn't grow up with dishwashers and everything being done for you. As four children, we were all involved, and Mum managed a strict rota, so no one escaped their turn at

the dishwashing, even though we had busy lives: me with my soccer and the others with their music.

I'm a bit old-fashioned in this way. I don't have rules and regulations at home, but what I do have is a very hands-on family. It's not me standing there, cooking away and everyone watching. On Saturday morning, after the girls have been to the gym and Jack has finished his soccer practice, we come back and prepare a late lunch together. We won't eat dinner until seven thirty, eight o'clock, and then it will be a slow braise. For Sunday lunch, we have friends and family around. Over the weekend, we might indulge in a dessert, but Monday to Friday dinner is a substantial main course followed by fruit.

Not everything we eat comes from the farmers' market. It would be great, but just not practical. Tana will shop two or three times a week at a supermarket, and I have to say that some of the supermarkets are doing some really good, interesting food lines. Out of respect for real quality ingredients, we also go to specialist purveyors, like our butcher. Knowing where your food comes from and being able to trace it right back to its source is important to me.

I'd rather spend more and eat less, buy the best quality ingredients and savor them, buy what we need and no more. Sometimes I find it embarrassing when I see the amount of food that we, as a nation, waste.

I find it frustrating that we are forgetting that there has always been a traditional British cuisine, and that it doesn't have to revolve around steak and kidney pie, or fish and chips. I remember watching my mother cook at the Cobweb tearooms in Stratford-upon-Avon, making ham hock and barley soup, white veal stew, and the most amazing honey-glazed roast ham—all, of course, served with fries. What you don't see nowadays is the way she used to stud the ham with cloves and caramelize it. All that now-forgotten, unfashionable stuff was traditional British cooking. Wonderful, but cast aside in our haste to experiment with modern fads.

We are at risk of trying to make food too sophisticated as we move along, changing ingredients to follow what's in vogue. The words "trendy food," "trendy restaurants," and, especially, "trendy chef" make me cringe. It is not always necessary to use foie gras with the finest filet mignon and line-caught turbot. Sometimes it's just better to braise some oxtail and cook with mackerel, pollack, or barramundi.

I'm always excited around food. There are so many opportunities to prepare and eat good food in the home if you have the patience and determination. I am sure that once you are good at making fabulous fresh pasta, you will want to make ravioli. Once you've mastered the perfect ravioli, you will want to get more intricate with the filling. A domestic kitchen is a far superior place to what it was ten years ago, with amazing gadgets and appliances. Most of us are competitive. We want to outdo our neighbors. We know and understand the importance of eating well. So if you mix that with a peacock desire to be the one who hosts the best dinner parties, you will be on the path to a whole new dimension in your life at home.

But don't get overconfident and miss the point when preparing a dinner party. Lighten up, have a glass of wine. Have your guests in the kitchen with you, and instead of showing off to them, involve them. Delegate the first course and the dessert while you tend to the main course. What can be difficult for me when going to dinner parties is people hanging on your every forkful. The food has been prepared in order to be enjoyed. It should be relaxing, not taking you into a stress zone.

The palate can be educated. It's a matter of learning, of discipline, and of practice. It is also the best reason in the world to stop smoking. Smoking will always dull your palate and confuse your tastebuds. It's a bit like playing soccer with your bootlaces tied together.

I love to see an array of cookbooks on someone's shelf. It means that I can see who excites people. I have hundreds of cookbooks in my kitchen. I especially love to see a top chef's recipes domesticated for home use, although I get nervous if people tell me that they follow my recipes word

for word. A recipe is a guideline. Adding, subtracting, evolving it—that is part of the pleasure. If a particular herb is not to your taste, if you don't like the strength of rosemary, say, then by all means, use thyme, especially lemon thyme. If you prefer the purple basil in the middle of summer, then great (if you ever can get it). If you are not excited about using rutabaga the way I am, then substitute celery root. We don't eat enough roots like these and turnips or kohlrabies—in terms of flavor, they're extraordinary.

Adapting a recipe's ingredients is completely in your hands. But the method is what really matters. The techniques in cooking are rigorous and imperative: They are your passport to a successful dish. Cooks must practice, practice, practice. Anyone can learn, but you need focus, proper understanding, and to go at the right pace, not running before you can walk.



I'll never forget, as a 22-year-old commis chef, working for the Roux brothers, when all I wanted to do was bake—make the most amazing puff pastry, choux pastry, sourdough bread, and tomato and olive bread, using a natural yeast and fermentation. As a baker, you would start at midnight and work until midday. At half past midnight, the kitchen fell silent. All you

could hear were the timers and the steamers for the second rise. On one occasion, I had to put together this marquise chocolate. Pascal, the young French pastry chef I was taking the section over from, could hardly speak English. He left me a box of After Eight mints, and said that I was to put a layer of chocolate mousse in the bottom of the mold and then add the After Eights. He wanted me to cut them in half and arrange them in threes in order to get this line of mints going through the mousse. I was thinking: this guy's winding me up. He's trying to get me into trouble. So I ate the mints instead.

The next day, Albert Roux came in. You have to give him one of everything, down to every bread roll, so that he can taste it all. I gave him the marquise, and he went bananas because it didn't have the mints running through the center. I couldn't believe he would make an amazing chocolate mousse and stick After Eight mints in the middle. I got a bollocking. The marquise was thrown in the trash, and I had to start again. I grew up on a council estate, living in subsidized housing, but have been able to learn from the best. I've trained my palate with some of the greatest chefs. But sometimes you have to question even the best and greatest. Cookery is quite a journey. Take nothing for granted.

Gordon Ransay



hot and cold soups

Soups are truly versatile: They can be as light or substantial as you want. In small amounts, a soup can excite the palate in the form of a first course. Enrich the broth or bulk it up with chunky ingredients and it is a satisfying main course.

I fell in love with chowders when I spent a few months filming in the U.S. We tasted amazing New England clam chowders on the East Coast. In San Francisco, one of the main treats was sourdough bread bowls filled with thick bisques and creamy soups. Once you've devoured the soup, you're left with a flavorful bread bowl to break apart and savor.

Whether you're making an elegant blended soup or a more homey chowder, always start with a good base. Good-quality stock provides a depth of flavor that brings together all the elements in a soup. It is also important to season well.

Chilled cucumber soup
Curried cauliflower and Cheddar soup
Roast chestnut, parsnip, and apple soup
Asparagus velouté
Alnwick soup
Broccoli, Stilton, and pear soup
Conger eel bisque
Italian-style turnip soup

Cornish crab soup

Oxtail soup

Summer soup

Crayfish chowder

Baked potato soup with sour cream

Creamy sorrel soup



Chilled cucumber soup

Nothing beats a chilled cucumber soup on a hot, balmy day: It cools the body and whets the appetite. I find a little horseradish cream brings the soup alive, but you can leave it out to keep the flavors subtle and light.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

3 English cucumbers, about 1½ pounds each, straight from the refrigerator

lemon juice to taste

1 tablespoon olive oil handful of fresh dillweed, leaves roughly chopped, plus a few fronds for garnish

2 cups plain yogurt

1–2 tablespoons cream-style horseradish, or to taste (optional)

Peel the cucumbers and cut two lengthwise into quarters. Slice off the seedy core from each quarter, then chop into dice. Put into a large bowl and set aside.

Peel the remaining cucumber into long, thin ribbons using a swivel vegetable peeler. (Cut the ribbons in half if you think they are too long.) Place in another bowl and toss with a little lemon juice, the olive oil, chopped dill, and a seasoning of salt and pepper. Cover with plastic wrap and keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Put half the yogurt, a pinch of salt, some pepper, and half the chopped cucumber into a blender. Blitz to a smooth purée. Press the purée through a fine sieve, pushing down hard with the back of a ladle. Discard the

cucumber pulp in the sieve. Repeat the process with the remaining chopped cucumber and yogurt. Taste and adjust the seasoning of the cucumber purée, adding horseradish or a squeeze of lemon juice, as desired. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate if not serving immediately.

To serve, pour the cold soup into chilled bowls and garnish with the dressed cucumber ribbons and dill fronds.



Curried cauliflower and Cheddar soup

A little curry powder and saffron elevate the classic combination of cauliflower and cheese to another dimension in this soup. It is ideal as a welcoming first course or a comforting and warming lunch when the weather is cold. The soup is delicious served with warm Indian bread.

SERVES 6 AS A FIRST COURSE OR 4 AS A LIGHT LUNCH

4 tablespoons olive oil

2 small onions, chopped

2 celery ribs, chopped

1 medium head of cauliflower, cut into florets

1 teaspoon mild curry powder

pinch of saffron strands

1¼ cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

1¼ cups milk

4 ounces medium or sharp Cheddar, grated (about 1 heaped cup)

Heat half the oil in a large pot and add the onions and celery. Stir over medium heat until the vegetables are beginning to soften, 3–4 minutes. Add the remaining oil, the cauliflower florets, curry powder, and saffron, and season with salt and pepper. Stir well and cook for a couple of minutes. Cover the pot and cook for 4–5 minutes, lifting the lid to give the mixture a stir every now and then.

Remove the lid and pour in the chicken stock. Bring to a simmer, then pour in the milk, adding a splash of water if the liquid does not cover the

vegetables. Return to a gentle simmer. Partially cover the pot and simmer until the cauliflower is very soft, about 10 minutes.

Use an immersion blender to purée the soup in the pot, or purée the soup in two batches in a regular blender, then return the soup to the pot. Bring to a gentle simmer over low heat, then slowly stir in the cheese to melt. If the soup is too thick, stir in a little hot water. Taste and adjust the seasoning before serving.

Roast chestnut, parsnip, and apple soup

The subtle, nutty flavor of chestnuts is paired with sweet apples and parsnips in this creamy soup. I love this earthy combination of flavors. The soup makes an easy lunch when served with a toasted cheese sandwich. Save time by using vacuum-packed chestnuts, which have been peeled and are ready to use.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

1½ tablespoons butter

2 medium parsnips, chopped

2 celery ribs, chopped

2 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped

8 ounces roasted chestnuts, shelled, peeled, and roughly chopped

2½ cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

2–4 tablespoons light cream for serving

Melt the butter in a wide pot and add the parsnips, celery, and a little seasoning. Stir over high heat until the vegetables are lightly golden, 4–6 minutes. Tip in the apples and cook, stirring occasionally, until the apples are soft, 4–5 minutes longer.

Add the chestnuts, pour in the stock to cover, and bring to a simmer. Cook for 5–10 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and use an immersion blender (or a regular blender) to blitz the soup to a smooth and creamy purée.

Return the soup to the pot, if necessary, and taste and adjust the seasoning. If you prefer the soup thinner, loosen the consistency with a splash of boiling water. Reheat gently just before serving. Serve in warm bowls garnished with swirls of cream.

Asparagus velouté

The delicate flavor of asparagus comes through in this smooth and velvety soup. At the restaurant, we use older spears and asparagus trimmings to make the velouté, reserving all the young, tender spears for salads and for garnishes. The soup can be served hot or well chilled.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

2 large bunches of asparagus, about 1¾ pounds in total
1½ tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
2 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, chopped
1 celery rib, chopped
leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme
about 3 cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)
squeeze of lemon juice (optional)
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup heavy cream

Pick out 12 of the most attractive asparagus spears and cut off the tips to use for garnish. Roughly chop the rest of the asparagus and set aside.

Heat the oil and half of the butter in a large pot and add the onion, celery, and a seasoning of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, 4–6 minutes. Add the chopped asparagus and the thyme and stir over high heat until the asparagus is tender but still vibrant green, 3–4 minutes. Pour in just enough stock to cover and simmer for 2 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat.

Blend the soup while it is still hot: Place half the vegetables in a blender using a slotted spoon, add one or two ladles of hot stock, and blend well. Push the resulting purée through a fine sieve into a clean pot, pressing down hard with the back of the ladle. Discard the pulp. Repeat with the remaining soup. Gradually add more hot stock to the sieved purée until you get a creamy consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a little lemon juice if you like, and erring toward the side of over-seasoning if you intend to serve the soup cold.

When ready to serve, add the cream and gently reheat until the soup just comes to a simmer. Meanwhile, sauté the asparagus tips in the remaining butter with some seasoning in a hot frying pan. Add a splash of water, cover the pan, and let the asparagus steam until just tender, 2–3 minutes.

Pour the soup into warm bowls and garnish with the asparagus tips. Drizzle a little olive oil over the top and serve immediately.





Alnwick soup

I've used the core ingredients of the classic Alnwick stew, from Northumberland, England, to make this hearty soup. The broth is light and flavorful, and at the same time the chunks of ham and vegetables are nourishing and satisfying. Eat with rye or seeded bread. Comfort in a bowl.

SERVES 4–6

Broth:

2 smoked ham hocks, about 1¾ pounds in total

1 large onion, roughly chopped

2 large carrots, roughly chopped

2 celery ribs, roughly chopped

1 bay leaf

few sprigs of fresh thyme

½ teaspoon black peppercorns

To finish:

2 large onions, roughly chopped

2 large boiling potatoes, cut into bite-size chunks

2 celery ribs, roughly chopped

few sprigs of fresh thyme

generous handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Cut off any rind and excess fat from the ham hocks, then place in a large pot. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and let simmer for 10 minutes. Pour off the water.

Add the onion, carrots, celery, bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns to the pot to join the ham hocks. Cover with fresh water and bring to a simmer. Gently cook until the meat is tender and falling off the bone, 2½–3 hours, turning the hocks around halfway through to ensure even cooking. When ready, let the hocks cool in the liquid.

Remove the ham hocks to a large bowl using a pair of tongs. Pull the meat off the bone and tear into bite-size chunks. Strain the stock into a clean pot and discard the vegetables, herbs, and peppercorns. Add the onions, potatoes, celery, and thyme to the strained stock and bring to a simmer. Cook until the vegetables are soft, 30–40 minutes. Add the chunks of ham and simmer for 10 minutes longer to warm through. Ladle into warm soup bowls and sprinkle with parsley.

Broccoli, Stilton, and pear soup

Here's a soup that's perfect for entertaining, both for its elegance and for its ease of preparation. The broccoli soup can be prepared a day in advance, ready to reheat. It is best to roast the pears just before serving, but you can peel them earlier: Put them in water with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent them from turning brown, then drain and pat dry with paper towels before roasting so they will caramelize nicely.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

2 large heads of broccoli, about 2¼ pounds in total

3 cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

4 ounces Stilton, crumbled

2 firm but ripe pears

2 tablespoons butter

handful of toasted sliced almonds for garnish

Cut the broccoli into florets, but do not waste the stalks. Peel off the tough skins from the stalks and roughly chop up the tender core.

Bring the stock to a boil in a large pot. Add the broccoli and cover the pot. Cook until the broccoli is tender but still bright green, 3–4 minutes. In two batches, blend the broccoli and stock into a smooth soup, adding half of the Stilton as you do so. Return the soup to the pot. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Reheat just before serving.

Peel the pears and cut them in half lengthwise. Remove the cores with an apple corer. Melt the butter in a pan and add the pear halves, cut-side down.

Spoon the foaming butter over the pears to baste as you cook them. Pan-roast them on one side until they are golden brown around the edges, 1–2 minutes, then flip them over to pan-roast the other side for 1–2 minutes longer. Remove to a plate and drain off the excess butter.

Pour the soup into warm bowls and place a pan-roasted pear half in the center of each. Scatter the remaining crumbled Stilton and the sliced almonds over the soup to garnish. Serve at once.



Conger eel bisque

Conger eels, which you can find in ethnic markets, are considered a delicacy by the French and Japanese. Here I've used the eel as a base for a flavorful fish soup. It's rich, so serve it in small bowls with a few garlic croûtes.

SERVES 4–6 AS A FIRST COURSE

4½ pounds conger eel fillets (ask the fish merchant to remove the skin and cut the meat into boneless fillets)

pinch of saffron strands

olive oil for cooking

1 fennel bulb, finely sliced

1 carrot, chopped

2 celery ribs, chopped

1 shallot, chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed

2 star anise

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 cup Pernod or Noilly Prat

1 large potato, about 12 ounces, finely diced (about 2 heaped cups)

5 vine-ripened plum or Roma tomatoes, deseeded and chopped
each of fresh basil and flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

4 cups hot fish stock (see Chapter 9)

squeeze of lemon juice (optional)

Season the eel fillets with salt, pepper, and saffron, then drizzle on a little olive oil. Toss well to coat evenly. Heat a thin layer of olive oil in a wide

pot. Fry the eel fillets in batches over medium heat for 2–3 minutes on each side. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Add a little more oil to the pot and toss in the fennel, carrot, celery, shallot, garlic, star anise, and cayenne. Cook over medium heat for a few minutes, stirring frequently. Pour in the Pernod and boil until reduced to a syrupy consistency. Add the potato, tomatoes, and herbs, then return the eel to the pot. Pour in enough stock to cover and bring to a simmer. Cook gently until the potatoes are very soft, 15–20 minutes.

Remove and discard the star anise. In batches, blend the soup until smooth, holding a dish towel over the blender as you blitz to avoid hot-soup splatters. Strain the soup through a fine sieve into a clean pot, pressing down to extract all the liquid.

Return the soup to a gentle simmer and reheat for a few minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a squeeze of lemon juice if needed. Serve immediately.

Italian-style turnip soup

This is a great quick and healthy soup for a weeknight supper. It is also ideal for vegetarians—simply omit the bacon and use vegetable stock. You also could add a mixture of root vegetables and replace the rice with macaroni or other pasta.

SERVES 4–6

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

1 thick slice lean bacon, chopped

1 small onion, chopped into ½-inch dice

1 pound turnips, chopped into ½-inch dice

scant 1 cup risotto rice, such as carnaroli, vialone nano, or arborio

3 cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

⅓ cup freshly grated Parmesan

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Heat the butter and oil in a large pot. As the butter begins to foam, add the bacon and fry until golden brown, 3–4 minutes. Stir in the onion, turnips, and some salt and pepper and cook until the vegetables are soft and lightly golden, 6–8 minutes longer.

Tip in the rice and stir well, adding a little more oil if necessary. Toast the rice for a minute, then pour in the stock to cover. Give the mixture a stir. Partially cover the pot and simmer gently until the rice is tender, 15–20 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Add a little boiling water as necessary to increase the broth.

Just before serving, stir in 2 tablespoons of Parmesan. Ladle the soup into warm bowls and sprinkle the remaining Parmesan and the chopped parsley on top. Serve immediately.

Cornish crab soup

This crab soup instantly transports me to lovely vacations by the coast in Cornwall, in the southwest of England. It may seem like a lot of effort to pick the meat from the crabs and use the shells to make your own stock, but trust me, the results are well worth it.

SERVES 4

1 or more cooked crabs, depending on type, 3½–4 pounds in total
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, minced
1 large carrot, minced
2 celery ribs, minced
1 large garlic clove, sliced
1 lemongrass stalk, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
splash of brandy or Cognac
scant 1 cup Noilly Prat or dry white wine
3 plum or Roma tomatoes, chopped
sprig each of fresh basil, tarragon, and parsley
3–4 tablespoons crème fraîche
handful of cilantro leaves for garnish

Remove the meat from the crab bodies, legs, and claws (be sure to discard the small spongy sac and furry gray gills that are known as dead man's fingers). Use the back of a Chinese cleaver, a strong chef's knife, or a pestle to break up the crab shells into small pieces. Place them in a large bowl.

Now make the crab stock: Heat the oil in a large pot and add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, and lemongrass. Stir over high heat until the vegetables are golden and beginning to soften, 4–6 minutes. Add the crab shells, tomato paste, and a splash of brandy or Cognac and stir well. Fry for 4–5 minutes longer, stirring frequently. Add the Noilly Prat and boil for a few minutes until reduced by two-thirds. Pour in enough water to cover (about 3 cups) and bring to a simmer. Skim off any scum or froth from the surface of the liquid, then add the tomatoes and herbs. Simmer for 20 minutes.

Strain the stock through a fine sieve into a clean pot. Discard the shells and vegetables. Bring the stock to a boil and let it bubble vigorously until reduced by a third, to about 2 cups. Stir in a few tablespoons of crème fraîche and season well to taste.

Spoon the crabmeat into the center of warmed bowls and pour the piping hot soup around. (You could also add the crabmeat to the gently simmering soup to warm through before serving.) Garnish with cilantro leaves and serve.



Oxtail soup

Oxtail is still a relatively cheap cut, and the gelatinous nature of the meat makes it ideal for soups and stews. I remember it as one of my favorite soups when I was growing up, and I think it's a shame this warming and delicious soup isn't as popular as it used to be.

SERVES 4

1 oxtail, about 3½ pounds, disjointed
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2–3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large carrot, roughly chopped
1 turnip, roughly chopped
1 celery rib, roughly chopped
1 large onion, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
few sprigs of fresh thyme
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
2 teaspoons tomato paste
1¼ cups red wine
5 cups hot beef stock (see Chapter 9)
2 tablespoons butter, softened
handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Trim off any excess fat from the oxtail pieces. In a shallow bowl, mix 2 tablespoons of the flour with some salt and pepper. Heat half the oil in a large, heavy-based or cast-iron pot until hot. Coat the oxtail pieces with the seasoned flour, shaking off any excess, and fry until evenly browned all over, 2–2½ minutes on each side. Remove the oxtail to a plate and set aside.

Add the remaining oil to the pot along with the chopped vegetables, herbs, and peppercorns. Cook until the vegetables begin to soften, 4–5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and remaining seasoned flour, adding a little more oil as necessary. Cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring frequently.

Pour in the red wine and scrape the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to dislodge the sediment. Boil for a few minutes. Return the oxtail to the pot and pour in the stock to cover. Bring to a simmer and skim off any scum that rises to the surface. Partially cover the pot and cook gently until the oxtail meat is very tender and comes off the bone easily, about 3 hours. With a pair of kitchen tongs, lift out the oxtail pieces to a large bowl and let cool slightly.

Strain the soup through a fine sieve into a clean pot, pushing down on the vegetables with the back of a ladle to extract as much liquid as possible. To thicken the soup, mix the remaining 2 tablespoons of flour with the butter, then whisk into the simmering soup a little at a time. Simmer for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, pull the meat from the oxtail bones and shred into small pieces. Taste and adjust the seasoning of the soup, then add the shredded meat to warm through. Sprinkle with parsley before serving.

Summer soup

Most summer soups are served smooth and creamy, and usually cold, but I like some to be rustic—chunky vegetables in a light broth. If you decide to purée the soup, mix in some heavy cream after blending, to add richness and to give a silky texture.

SERVES 4–6

¼ cup olive oil

2 small onions, chopped into ½-inch dice

**2 large potatoes, about 1 pound in total, chopped into ½-inch dice
(about 3 cups)**

8 ounces zucchini, chopped into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)

leaves stripped from a few sprigs of fresh thyme

4 cups hot vegetable or chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

1 head of romaine, finely shredded

handful each of fresh mint and flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Heat a large pot with the oil and add the onions and potatoes. Cook over medium heat for 4–5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the zucchini, thyme leaves, and some salt and pepper and cook for a couple of minutes longer.

Pour in the stock and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Add the lettuce and remove from the heat as soon as the lettuce has wilted. Scatter half of the chopped herbs over the soup. Ladle into warm bowls and garnish with the remaining chopped herbs.

Crayfish chowder

Crayfish (or crawfish as they are known in the southern U.S.) are delicious in salads, in rice and pasta dishes, and in soups, such as this New England-style chowder. Although you can buy cooked and shelled crayfish tails, you will miss out on the flavor from the shells and heads. So buy whole crayfish (frozen ones if you are too squeamish to cook them alive). This chowder is quite substantial. With sourdough bread and a light salad, it will make a good, satisfying lunch.

SERVES 4

Crayfish stock:

3½–4½ pounds live crayfish
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 celery rib, chopped
2 bay leaves
few sprigs of fresh thyme
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup dry white wine
1 plum or Roma tomato, chopped

Chowder:

2 tablespoons butter
1 leek, minced
1 carrot, minced
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 potato, finely diced

1 cup corn kernels, thawed if frozen
squeeze of lemon juice, to taste
¼ cup crème fraîche for serving (optional)
handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the crayfish in two batches: Add half to the pot and bring the water back to a boil. Cook for 3 minutes, then remove with tongs and drop into a large bowl of ice water. Repeat with the remaining crayfish.

Drain the crayfish and remove the meat: First, pull out the claws. Snip the shell underneath the tail with kitchen scissors, take out the tail meat, and set aside. If you have the time and patience, crack the claws and extract the small pieces of meat. Set aside with the meat from the tails. Place the heads and shells in a large bowl and bash them with a pestle or the end of a rolling pin to break them into smaller pieces.

Pour the water from the pot, then heat the oil in it. Stir in the onion, carrot, celery, and herbs. Cook over high heat until the vegetables are lightly browned, 4–6 minutes. Add the tomato paste and crayfish shells. Stir over high heat for 4–5 minutes.

Pour in the white wine and boil until it has almost all evaporated and the pot is quite dry. Add the chopped tomato and pour in enough water to cover the shells. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for 15–20 minutes. When ready, strain the stock through a fine sieve into a clean pot and discard the shells and vegetables. Boil the stock until reduced to about 3 cups.

For the chowder, melt the butter in a large pot and stir in the leek, carrot, and a little salt and pepper. Sauté over medium heat until the vegetables begin to soften, 4–6 minutes. Add the flour and cook for a couple of minutes longer, stirring frequently. Pour in the crayfish stock and tip in the potatoes. Simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 5 minutes. Add the corn and cook until tender, 2–3 minutes.

Adjust the seasoning, adding a little lemon juice to taste. Add the crayfish meat to the soup and heat for a few minutes to warm through. Ladle into warm bowls and serve immediately, garnished with a dollop of crème fraîche and a sprinkling of chopped parsley.





Baked potato soup with sour cream

This soup was inspired by one I had many years ago at the acclaimed El Bulli restaurant in Spain. The clear broth is infused with the flavor of baked potatoes and served with homemade potato gnocchi: a surprising and delightful mouthful of flavors and textures.

SERVES 4–6 AS A FIRST COURSE

4 large baking potatoes, about 1¾ pounds in total, scrubbed and dried

3 cups clear chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

⅔ cup sour cream

handful of fresh chives, minced

Gnocchi:

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

2½ tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

1 large egg, lightly beaten

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Wrap the potatoes in a large sheet of foil. Bake until tender when pierced with a skewer, about 1½ hours. Remove from the oven and turn down the heat to 300°F. Wearing rubber gloves to protect your hands, peel the skins off the potatoes while still hot. Spread the skins out on a baking sheet and bake until dry and crisp, 15–20 minutes. Turn off the oven, but leave the skins inside to continue drying.

Meanwhile, make the gnocchi. Mash the potatoes using a potato ricer, then spread out on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper and let cool completely. You need 14 ounces or about 2 heaped cups (save the rest for another dish). Mix in the flour, salt, Parmesan, and olive oil. Slowly incorporate the egg until the mixture comes together to form a dough; you may not need all the egg. Lightly knead the dough on a floured surface until smooth. Divide into four balls. Roll each ball into a long sausage about ½ inch thick. Cut into ½-inch pieces. Roll each piece lightly between your palms to neaten the shape (you don't have to make perfect rounds).

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil and have ready a bowl of ice water. Blanch the gnocchi in batches until they float to the surface, 2–3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and immediately plunge into the ice water. Drain well, then toss in a bowl with a generous drizzle of olive oil and some seasoning.

For the soup, bring the stock to a boil in a pot with a little salt and pepper. Tip in the crisp potato skins. Cover the pot and gently simmer until the skins have imparted their color and flavor to the stock, 30–40 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a clean pot. Discard the skins. When ready to serve, reheat the gnocchi in the potato-infused broth and simmer for a minute. Divide among warm bowls and garnish with spoonfuls of sour cream and minced chives.



Creamy sorrel soup

There is no match for the distinctive zesty and peppery flavor of sorrel. I cook with it as much as possible when it is in season. This soup is one of my favorites, and is equally delicious hot or cold. Make sure the stock is piping hot when you add the sorrel to the pan so that the leaves wilt quickly and you retain their vibrant green color.

SERVES 4

2 large bunches of sorrel, 5–6 ounces in total, washed

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 large Spanish or mild onion, chopped

2 cups peeled and finely diced potatoes

3 cups hot chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sour cream

handful of red-vein sorrel leaves for garnish (optional)

Roughly chop the sorrel and set aside. Heat the oil in a pot and add the onion, potatoes, and some seasoning. Stir well and cover the pot with a lid. Cook over medium to low heat for 10 minutes, lifting the lid every once in a while to give the vegetables a stir.

When the potatoes are soft, pour in the hot stock and boil for a few minutes. Tip in the sorrel. As soon as the leaves begin to wilt, immediately remove the pot from the heat. In two batches, transfer the soup to a blender and blitz until very smooth. (Hold a dish towel over the lid of the blender to protect your hands from any hot soup that might splash out.)

Stir in half of the sour cream and reheat the soup, if necessary. Pour into warm bowls and garnish with the remaining sour cream and, if you wish, some red-vein sorrel.





pasta and grains

Tana has begun to feed the kids a vegetarian meal once a week, which means being creative in combining beans and other legumes, grains, and pasta with a variety of vegetables. The kids love it when she experiments. When the weather is cold we use a lot of pearl barley, adding it to soups, stews, and winter salads. Barley can even take the place of rice in a risotto. The excellent barley risotto here has featured many a time on our restaurant menus.

My love affair with pasta stems from the time I spent in Sicily and Sardinia as a young chef. When I finally returned to London and opened Aubergine back in October, 1993, I was determined to include handmade pasta on the menu. Fresh pasta can be mind-blowing, and any young chef joining our brigade had to master the art of making it. It is a fundamental skill in our kitchens.

Farfalle with bacon, peas, and sage
Fresh tagliatelle with Stilton and mushrooms
Grilled vegetable lasagne
Conchiglie with meaty tomato ragù
Penne with baked pumpkin and rosemary
Spaghetti with broccoli, garlic, and chili
Chorizo, fava bean, and mint couscous
Linguine with lemon, feta, and basil
Smoked haddock with white beans and parsley
Gordon's posh kedgeree

Spinach, mushroom, and ricotta cannelloni
Goat cheese, beet, and lentil salad
Wild mushroom-barley risotto
Herby rice pilaf with pistachios and almonds





Farfalle with bacon, peas, and sage

This is an easy version of pasta carbonara, without any egg yolks, so there is no chance of the sauce splitting. My kids must have this for supper once a week—they love it!

SERVES 4

14 ounces dried farfalle

2 tablespoons olive oil

5 ounces thick-sliced lean bacon, chopped

1 large garlic clove, minced

1¼ cups heavy cream

1 cup green peas, thawed if frozen

⅔ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus extra for sprinkling

small handful each of fresh sage and flat-leaf parsley, leaves only

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Tip in the farfalle and cook according to the package directions until the pasta is al dente.

Heat the oil in large saucepan and add the bacon. Fry over high heat until the bacon is golden brown, 3–4 minutes. Add the garlic and fry for a minute. Pour in the cream and bring to a boil. Let simmer until reduced and thickened slightly, about 5 minutes. Tip in the peas, bring back to a simmer, and cook for 3–4 minutes longer. Stir the grated Parmesan into the sauce, then taste and adjust the seasoning.

When the pasta is ready, drain it in a colander and immediately tip into the sauce. Add the herbs and toss the pasta until well coated with the creamy

sauce. Divide among warm plates and sprinkle with a little more Parmesan before serving.

Fresh tagliatelle with Stilton and mushrooms

Tana likes to make this toward year end, using leftover Stilton from Christmas. Of course, you can use any blue cheese: Piquant Roquefort, savory Dolcelatte, or creamy Gorgonzola would all work well.

SERVES 6

2 tablespoons butter

8 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced (about 3½ cups)

½ cup heavy cream

1 pound fresh tagliatelle

4 ounces Stilton, chopped or crumbled

handful each of fresh oregano and flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. In the meantime, melt the butter in a wide sauté pan. When it begins to foam, add the mushrooms and some seasoning. Fry over high heat, tossing occasionally, until the mushrooms are golden brown and tender. Add the cream and reduce the heat.

Cook the tagliatelle in the boiling water until al dente. Drain the pasta, reserving 4–5 tablespoons of the water in the pot. Return the tagliatelle to the pot and tip in the mushrooms and cream. Add three-quarters of the Stilton and half of the chopped herbs, then toss until the pasta is evenly coated with the melting cheese and mushroom sauce.

Divide among individual serving plates and scatter the remaining Stilton and herbs over the top. Serve at once.





Grilled vegetable lasagne

Food like this is far too good to reserve just for vegetarians. If you have time, make the tomato sauce the day before to let the flavors balance out.

SERVES 4–6

10 ounces fresh lasagne sheets (about 12)
¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan
3 buffalo mozzarella, 5 ounces each, thinly sliced
small handful of fresh basil, leaves only

Tomato and basil sauce:

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 celery ribs, chopped
1 carrot, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme
28-ounce can crushed tomatoes in juice
1 teaspoon sugar (optional)
small handful of fresh basil, leaves torn

Grilled vegetables:

1 small eggplant
1 large zucchini
1 yellow crookneck squash
olive oil for drizzling
leaves stripped from a few sprigs of fresh thyme
sprig of fresh rosemary, leaves chopped

1 yellow bell pepper

1 red bell pepper

First, make the tomato sauce. Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, carrot, garlic, and thyme with some salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft, 6–8 minutes. Tip in the tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has reduced and thickened slightly, about 30 minutes. Taste and add sugar if the sauce seems acidic. Meanwhile, prepare the vegetables. Trim the eggplant, zucchini, and squash, then slice into ½-inch rounds. Drizzle with olive oil and season. Toss with the herbs. Cook in batches on a hot grill pan until tender and lightly charred, 2–3 minutes on each side. Transfer to a large bowl.

Preheat the broiler to hot. Cut the bell peppers in half and place them cut-side down on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Broil until well charred, 10–15 minutes. Remove and let cool slightly before peeling off the skins and discarding the seeds. Cut the flesh into wedges and add to the bowl of grilled vegetables.

When the tomato sauce is ready, add the basil. Transfer to a food processor and blitz until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Tip into a bowl and let cool.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spoon a thin layer of tomato sauce over the bottom of a deep baking dish. Put two sheets of lasagne on top, then sprinkle with a little Parmesan. Arrange a layer of grilled vegetables on the pasta, followed by a layer of mozzarella. Add another layer of tomato sauce. Repeat the layers until you reach the top of the dish. You want to finish with a layer of lasagne sheets spread generously with tomato sauce, topped with a final layer of mozzarella cheese and a sprinkling of Parmesan. Bake until the cheese topping is golden brown and the sauce is bubbling around the sides, 30–40 minutes.

Conchiglie with meaty tomato ragù

This is my version of a pasta bolognese. I prefer to use conchiglie, because their shell shape holds more of the flavorful sauce than spaghetti does. Meat ragù freezes well and makes an ideal prepare-ahead supper.

SERVES 4

Ragù:

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, minced

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 celery rib, minced

1 carrot, minced

leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary

1 pound lean ground beef

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup dry white wine

14-ounce can crushed tomatoes in juice

$1\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9) or water

pinch of sugar (optional)

Pasta:

14 ounces dried conchiglie

large handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley and oregano, chopped

freshly grated Parmesan for serving

Heat a tablespoon of olive oil in a large, heavy-based pan until hot. Add the onion and some seasoning. Fry over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the onion begins to soften, 6–8 minutes. Tip in the garlic, celery, carrot, and

herbs. Sauté over high heat until the vegetables are lightly golden, 3–4 minutes.

Add the remaining oil and the beef. Stir well, pressing down on the beef to break it up. Season again and continue to stir over high heat until the beef is no longer red. Pour in the wine and let it boil vigorously until almost all evaporated and the pan is quite dry.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the tomatoes and stock. Stir well to mix. When the liquid in the pan begins to boil, turn the heat to the lowest setting and partially cover the pan. Cook gently for 2½–3 hours, stirring occasionally. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a pinch of sugar, if necessary, to balance the acidity of the tomatoes.

About 15 minutes before you are ready to serve, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. As soon as the pasta is ready, drain it and immediately add to the hot ragù, stirring in the chopped herbs as well. Divide among warm plates and serve with a generous grating of black pepper and Parmesan.

Penne with baked pumpkin and rosemary

There are two ways to serve this sauce: smooth or chunky. The texture depends both on your taste and on the firmness of the pumpkin flesh. Small pumpkins will have firmer flesh and a sweetness that will caramelize well on cooking.

SERVES 4–6 AS A FIRST COURSE OR LIGHT LUNCH

1-pound wedge of pumpkin, skin on, seeds and fibers removed
olive oil for drizzling
4 garlic cloves, skin on, halved
leaves from a few sprigs of fresh rosemary
few sprigs of fresh thyme
14 ounces dried penne
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus shavings for garnish

Heat the oven to 400°F. Cut the pumpkin into thin wedges. Spread a little olive oil over the bottom of a roasting pan and sprinkle with some salt and pepper. Arrange the pumpkin in a single layer in the pan and drizzle generously with more olive oil. Scatter the garlic, herbs, and a little more seasoning over the pumpkin. Bake until the pumpkin is soft, 20–25 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool for a few minutes. Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to a boil.

Reserve the oil in the roasting pan (discard the herbs and garlic pulp). Remove the skin from the pumpkin and cut the flesh into small, bite-sized chunks. If making a smooth sauce, put the pumpkin and reserved oil into a food processor and blitz to a smooth purée. Transfer to a small saucepan.

Bring to a boil and let bubble until reduced to a consistency that will coat the pasta well.

Cook the penne according to package directions until al dente. Drain in a colander and return to the hot pot.

Add the pumpkin purée and grated Parmesan and toss well. If you've decided to leave the pumpkins in chunks, simply toss them and the reserved oil with the pasta and Parmesan. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Divide among individual plates and sprinkle each serving with a small handful of Parmesan shavings.





Spaghetti with broccoli, garlic, and chili

I first tasted this pasta dish in Sicily, and it blew me away. Who would have thought a little garlic, chili pepper, and broccoli could make a delicious spaghetti sauce? The key is to flavor good-quality olive oil with the garlic and chili over lowish heat before you add the broccoli. You don't want the garlic to color too much or it will overpower the dish.

SERVES 4

14 ounces dried spaghetti

¼ cup olive oil

5 large garlic cloves, finely sliced

1 fresh, hot, red chili pepper, deseeded and minced

1 large head of broccoli, cut into small florets

splash of water or chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

squeeze of lemon juice, to taste

extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook according to package directions until al dente.

A few minutes before the pasta is ready, heat a large sauté pan with the oil over low to medium heat. Add the garlic, chili pepper, and a pinch of salt and sauté for a minute. When the garlic becomes sticky and very lightly golden around the edges, add the broccoli and a splash of water. Cover the pan and let steam for 2 minutes. Remove the lid, squeeze in the lemon juice, and toss the broccoli with a little more seasoning.

Drain the pasta and immediately tip into the sauté pan, adding a little of the salted water from the pasta pot to help create a sauce. Drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil and check the seasoning. Divide among warm plates and serve at once.

Chorizo, fava bean, and mint couscous

This makes a fantastic accompaniment to the red mullet with anchovy sauce on Chapter 3, or you can double the recipe to serve it on its own.

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH

1¹/₃ cups couscous

1¹/₃ cup olive oil

2 large shallots, minced

½ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon ground coriander

pinch of paprika

7 ounces fresh chorizo sausage, skin removed and chopped

8 ounces blanched and skinned fava beans (about 1¹/₃ cups)

large handful of fresh mint, leaves chopped

Place the couscous and a generous seasoning of salt and pepper in a large heatproof bowl. Stir to mix, then pour 1¼ cups boiling water evenly over the couscous. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let stand for 10–15 minutes.

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the shallots and spices. Cook, stirring frequently, until the shallots are soft, 6–8 minutes. Add the chorizo and fry until cooked, 3–4 minutes. Stir in the fava beans and cook until they are warmed through, 1–2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.

Uncover the couscous and fork to fluff up the grains. Add the contents of the frying pan to the couscous and mix well. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Finally, stir through the chopped mint. Serve warm.

Linguine with lemon, feta, and basil

The light and zesty flavor of this pasta dish makes it ideal for the summer. It's also quick and easy for supper during the week, because you are likely to have the ingredients on hand.

SERVES 4

1 pound fresh (or 10 ounces dried) linguine

¼ cup olive oil

grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

⅓ cup freshly grated Parmesan

handful of fresh basil, leaves only

7 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts

Cook the fresh pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water for 2 minutes. If using dried pasta, cook according to package directions until al dente. Tip the pasta into a colander, leaving about 2 tablespoons of the cooking water in the pot.

Immediately return the pasta to the pot and add the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, Parmesan, basil, and three-quarters of the crumbled feta. Toss well and check the seasoning. Divide among warm plates and scatter the remaining feta and the pine nuts over the top. Serve at once.





Smoked haddock with white beans and parsley

A little bacon enhances the flavor of smoked fish in this surf-and-turf combination. If you cannot find smoked haddock, you can substitute other smoked white fish.

SERVES 4

White beans and parsley:

4 cups soaked dried white beans (cannellini or navy)

3 thick slices of lean bacon, roughly chopped

few sprigs of fresh thyme

½ head of garlic, cut horizontally

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Smoked haddock:

2 thick slices of lean bacon, chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 skinless fillets of smoked haddock, about 1¼ pounds in total

2 tablespoons butter, cut in pieces

few sprigs of fresh thyme

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves only

Put the beans, bacon, thyme, and garlic in a pan and add water to cover. Bring to a boil and boil until the beans are soft, 1–1¼ hours. Use a slotted spoon to transfer half the beans to a blender. Add a ladleful or two of the cooking liquid and blitz to a fine purée. Transfer the purée to a clean saucepan. Drain the remaining beans, reserving the cooking liquid, and add to the purée. Remove and discard the bacon, thyme stems, and garlic. Stir to

mix the beans with the purée, adding a little more cooking liquid if the mixture is too thick. Keep warm.

For the smoked haddock, fry the bacon in half the oil until crisp. Drain on paper towels.

Heat another frying pan with the remaining oil until hot. Add the haddock fillets to the pan and fry for a minute. Add the butter, then throw in the thyme sprigs and parsley leaves. As the butter melts and foams, spoon it over the fish to baste. Fry until the fish is just cooked through, 1–2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and transfer to a warm plate, reserving the excess butter and oil. Let the fish rest for a couple of minutes.

Meanwhile, reheat the beans if necessary, and stir through the chopped parsley. Season to taste with black pepper. (You probably won't need salt because of the bacon and haddock.) Spoon the beans onto warm plates and lay the smoked haddock fillets on top. Add the crisp bacon and a little oil and butter from the pan in which you cooked the fish. Garnish with parsley leaves and serve.

Gordon's posh kedgeree

I've cooked many versions of Anglo-Indian kedgeree in my life. This is the one I make when we have guests staying over the weekend. It makes a great Saturday or Sunday brunch—rice is ideal if you have a hangover.

SERVES 4–6

2¾ cups chicken or fish stock (see Chapter 9)
few sprigs of fresh thyme
pinch of saffron strands
9 ounces skinless, lightly smoked salmon fillet
7 ounces large raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large shallots, minced
2 tablespoons butter, cut in pieces
1 teaspoon mild curry powder
2 cups basmati rice
12 quail eggs, at room temperature
handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped
lemon wedges for garnish

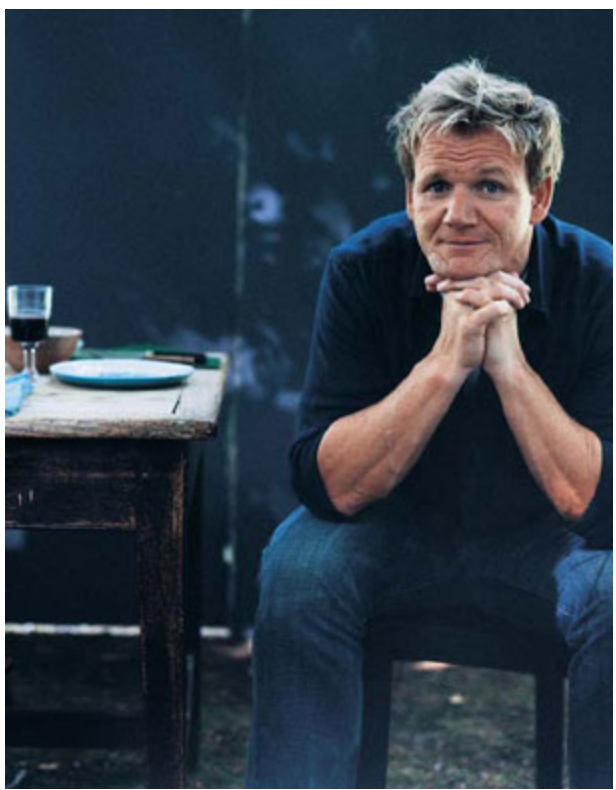
Put the stock, thyme, saffron, and a little salt and pepper into a saucepan. Bring to a simmer, then gently lower the salmon fillet into the stock and poach for 4 minutes. Lift the fish out with a slotted spatula onto a warm plate. Add the shrimp to the stock and poach just until they turn firm and opaque, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the shrimp to the plate of salmon. Cover with foil and keep warm.

Strain the stock and discard the thyme; set aside. Return the pan to the heat and add the olive oil, shallots, and some seasoning. Fry, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are soft but not browned, 4–6 minutes. Add the butter and curry powder. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes, then tip in the rice. Stir and cook for 2 minutes longer, to toast the rice lightly.

Add a generous seasoning of salt and pepper and pour in the stock. Stir and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan with a lid and let simmer for 10 minutes. Without lifting the lid, remove the pan from the heat and let the rice stand for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the quail eggs in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain and refresh under cold running water. Crack and peel off the skins, then cut each egg in half.

Fluff the rice with a fork to separate the grains, then taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a bit more butter if you wish. Break the salmon fillet into large flakes and add to the rice, along with the shrimp and most of the chopped parsley. Gently mix the ingredients through the rice. Pile onto warm plates and garnish with the quail eggs, remaining parsley, and lemon wedges. Serve at once.





Spinach, mushroom, and ricotta cannelloni

Like the grilled vegetable lasagne on Chapter 2, this is another delicious dish that's definitely not just for vegetarians. It can be prepared in advance, and then put into the oven about 20 minutes before you're ready to eat.

SERVES 6

10 ounces fresh lasagne sheets (about 12)
2–3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

Cheese sauce:

2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon English mustard
pinch of cayenne pepper
1¼ cups milk
½ cup grated Cheddar
2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan
1 cup crème fraîche or heavy cream

Filling:

1 tablespoon butter
14 ounces spinach leaves, washed
nutmeg for grating
2–3 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced
2 cups ricotta
2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

First, prepare the sauce. Melt the butter in a saucepan and stir in the flour, mustard, and cayenne. Stir over low heat for 2–3 minutes. Slowly whisk in the milk until smooth. Simmer, stirring, for 5 minutes to cook out the flour. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the cheeses until they have melted and the sauce is smooth. Transfer to a bowl and let cool. Once cooled, stir in the crème fraîche. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

To prepare the filling, melt the butter in a pan and add the spinach, some seasoning, and a light grating of nutmeg. Cook over high heat until the spinach has wilted, then tip into a colander set over a large bowl and let cool. Return the pan to the heat and add the olive oil, mushrooms, and some seasoning. Sauté the mushrooms until tender and any juices released have evaporated, 3–4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool. Give the spinach a light squeeze to remove excess moisture and add to the mushrooms. Stir in the ricotta and Parmesan. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Roll the cannelloni one at a time: Place a lasagne sheet on a cutting board. Spoon 2 tablespoons of filling along one end, leaving a bit of space at both edges, and roll up. Place on a tray, joined-side down. Repeat with the remaining pasta and filling.

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread half the cheese sauce over the bottom of a large baking dish and arrange the cannelloni in a single layer on top. Spread the remaining sauce over the cannelloni to cover, then sprinkle with the Parmesan. Bake until the topping is golden brown, 15–20 minutes. Bring to the table and serve at once.





Goat cheese, beet, and lentil salad

Baking beets in a salt crust intensifies the flavor. This salad combines sweet roasted beets with earthy lentils and creamy goat cheese. The marinated beet slices are optional, but they do add to the beauty of the salad.

SERVES 4

Baked beets:

1 pound red or mixed beets of similar size
rock salt or coarse sea salt
leaves stripped from a few sprigs of fresh thyme

Lentils:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Umbrian castelluccio or Puy lentils, rinsed and drained
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped lean bacon
1 carrot
2 celery ribs
few sprigs of fresh thyme

Marinated beets (optional):

2 baby beets, preferably Chioggia or candy cane variety
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

For serving:

handful of mixed salad leaves
handful each of fresh flat-leaf parsley and mint, leaves chopped
7 ounces goat cheese, crumbled or chopped

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Wash and dry the beets, then trim off the tops. Spread a thin layer of rock salt on a large piece of foil. Scatter on the thyme leaves and put the beets in the middle. Bring up the edges of the foil to seal in the beets and salt. Bake until tender when pierced with a small sharp knife, 30–40 minutes.

Prepare the lentils by putting all the ingredients in a pan with enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a simmer and cook until the lentils are tender, 15–20 minutes. When cooked, drain the lentils. Discard the bacon, vegetables, and thyme sprigs.

Meanwhile, if making the marinated beets, peel them and thinly slice with a mandoline. Place in a bowl. Drizzle the olive oil and balsamic vinegar over the beet slices and season. Let marinate in the refrigerator for at least 15–20 minutes.

Unwrap the beet parcel and let some of the heat disperse. While the beets are still warm, peel using a small knife (wear rubber gloves to avoid staining your hands). Cut into quarters. Divide the baked beets and lentils among individual serving plates. Garnish each plate with marinated beet slices, if using, and add salad leaves, herbs, and goat cheese.

Wild mushroom-barley risotto

Pearl barley adds a nutty flavor to this risotto, and it provides an interesting base for wild mushrooms. Barley is very easy to cook with—not as high-maintenance as risotto rice—because you can leave it to simmer without needing to stir it constantly.

SERVES 4

14 ounces wild mushrooms (such as cèpes or porcini, trompettes de la mort, and chanterelles)

3½ cups chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)

1½ tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, minced

1 cup pearl barley

splash of dry white wine

¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan

2 tablespoons mascarpone

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves minced

Clean the mushrooms and thickly slice the large ones. Set aside while you start the risotto.

Bring the stock to a gentle simmer in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, heat the butter and a tablespoon of olive oil in a large saucepan or sauté pan and add the onion and a little seasoning. Gently fry the onion, stirring occasionally, until it begins to soften, 4–6 minutes. Tip in the barley and stir well to coat. Toast the barley for 2 minutes, stirring frequently.

Add the splash of wine and let it bubble until reduced by half. Stir in two-thirds of the hot stock and simmer, stirring every once in a while, until the barley has absorbed almost all the liquid. Add more stock, a ladleful at a time, and simmer until the barley is just tender. (You may not need all the stock.) Stir in the Parmesan and mascarpone and season well to taste. Remove the pan from the heat and cover with a lid to keep warm.

Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan. Fry the mushrooms with some seasoning until they are lightly browned and any moisture released has evaporated, 3–4 minutes. Add the mushrooms to the risotto and stir well to mix.

Divide the risotto among warm plates and sprinkle with the minced parsley. Serve immediately.



Herby rice pilaf with pistachios and almonds

This sweetly perfumed rice pilaf is ideal with a good curry (see the goat curry on Chapter 4) or with baked fish.

SERVES 4

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 Spanish or mild onion, chopped

1½ cups basmati rice

1 cinnamon stick

3 star anise

pared zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange

2¼ cups hot water

½ cup roughly chopped, toasted almonds and pistachios

large handful of mixed fresh herbs, such as flat-leaf parsley, cilantro, mint, chervil, and chives, leaves chopped

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cut a circle of parchment paper slightly larger than a heavy-based, stovetop-to-oven casserole. Snip a small hole in the middle of the paper to serve as a steam vent.

Heat the casserole with the oil and sauté the onion until it begins to soften, 4–6 minutes. Stir in the rice, cinnamon, star anise, lemon and orange zests, and some salt and pepper. Stir well and toast the rice for a couple of minutes. Pour in the hot water and bring to a boil. Take the pot off the heat and quickly cover with the parchment paper before transferring to the oven.

Bake until the rice is tender and has absorbed most of the water, 20–25 minutes. Remove the casserole from the oven and let stand for about 5 minutes. Discard the parchment paper and fork the rice to separate the grains. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then stir through the chopped nuts and herbs.



fish and shellfish

To cook good food, you need to start with the best-quality ingredients you can find. This is paramount when it comes to fish and shellfish. We are fortunate to live near a fantastic fishmonger. The shop is tiny, but it stocks a variety of incredibly fresh seafood. Whenever we get the chance, Tana and I take the kids with us, because we feel it is important for them to see the amazing diversity of seafood on offer. They are growing up knowing what the different fish look like.

Sustainable fishing is an issue that is important to me. Over recent years, I've been trying to encourage the use of less expensive but sustainable fish, such as herring, mackerel, whiting, and trout. Of course I also enjoy cooking and eating scallops, oysters, halibut, and sea bass, but only every once in a while. The goal is to be conscious of what you buy and vary what you cook to keep things different and exciting.

Fish curry with lime and coconut rice
Breaded and fried oysters with sauce gribiche
Smoked trout pâté with horseradish cream and melba toasts
Whiting in piquant tomato sauce
Stuffed bream wrapped with bacon
Thai-style fishcakes with sweet chili sauce
Clams with bacon
Sea bass with olives, tomatoes, and fennel
Broiled herring with harissa
Red mullet with tomatoes, olives, and anchovies

Fisherman's stew

Poached halibut with creamy white wine and tarragon sauce

Deviled mackerel with tomato and fennel salad and horseradish potatoes

Grilled scallop and shrimp brochettes with cilantro-chili butter

Fish curry with lime and coconut rice

I was inspired to make this curry after a glorious vacation in Thailand, where we ate spicy Thai food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Any combination of fish and shellfish will work for this curry, although firm-textured fish that won't disintegrate as it cooks is best. You can leave the skins on to prevent the fish from breaking up.

SERVES 4

Fish curry:

14 ounces monkfish fillets, cut into bite-size chunks
1¾ cups coconut milk, mixed with 1¾ cups water
1 pound live mussels
2 tablespoons peanut oil
1 tablespoon palm sugar
2½ tablespoons fish sauce
5 ounces sugarsnap peas
3–4 scallions, minced
handful of fresh basil or cilantro leaves for garnish
toasted coconut shavings for garnish (optional)

Lime and coconut rice:

1½ cups jasmine rice, washed
1 cup coconut milk, mixed with ¾ cup water
juice of 1 lime
2 kaffir lime leaves
pinch of sea salt

Curry paste:

3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
3 large shallots, roughly chopped
6–7 large, mild, red chili peppers, deseeded and chopped
2-inch piece of fresh ginger, chopped
small handful of cilantro stems, chopped
1 lemongrass stalk, minced
2 kaffir lime leaves, minced (or finely grated zest of 2 limes)
½ teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
3–4 tablespoons water

Put the monkfish pieces into a large bowl with a little seasoning and spoon a few tablespoons of coconut milk over them. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to cook. Wash the mussels; discard any that do not open when gently tapped. To make the lime and coconut rice, put all the ingredients into a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and cover the pan. Simmer until the rice has absorbed most of the liquid, 8–10 minutes. Without removing the lid, remove from the heat and let the rice steam for 5–10 minutes.

While the rice is cooking, put all the ingredients for the curry paste into a food processor and blitz to a smooth paste, stopping the machine once or twice to scrape down the sides. If necessary, add a little more water to get a finely ground paste.

Heat the peanut oil in a deep pan or a wok. Add the curry paste and stir-fry for over low heat just until the paste smells fragrant, 2–3 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and water mixture, then stir in the palm sugar and fish sauce. Bring to a simmer, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

Tip in the sugarsnap peas, stir, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the mussels and monkfish, cover the pan, and simmer until the mussels have opened and the monkfish is opaque and just cooked through, 2–3 minutes. Scatter the

scallions and basil leaves over the top. Serve immediately with the lime and coconut rice, garnished with a sprinkling of toasted coconut shavings.







Breaded and fried oysters with sauce gribiche

Crisp breaded oysters are a good choice for those who are averse to eating them raw. I serve mine with sauce gribiche, which is similar to tartar sauce, but with the addition of finely chopped hard-cooked egg. This is great to have with a glass of chilled white wine or Champagne.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

Breaded oysters:

20 fresh oysters

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 extra-large egg, lightly beaten

¾ cup Japanese panko bread crumbs

peanut or vegetable oil for deep-frying

Sauce gribiche:

1 extra-large egg

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar

½ cup light olive oil

1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and drained

1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

First, prepare the sauce. Put the egg into a small saucepan, cover with cold water, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 9 minutes. Drain and cool under cold running water. Peel and halve the egg, then scoop out the yolk into the bowl of a food processor. Mince the white and set aside. Add the mustard, vinegar, olive oil, capers, and a little salt and pepper to the

food processor and blitz for a few seconds. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the egg white and parsley. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Spoon the sauce into a serving bowl and set aside.

Shuck the oysters one at a time: Hold an oyster in a thick, folded towel in one hand and take an oyster knife in the other. Stick the knife through the hinge of the oyster, holding it level, then wriggle the knife from side to side to cut through the strong hinge muscle. Push in the knife and twist up to lift the top shell. Pick out any large pieces of shell, then slide the knife along the bottom shell to release the oyster. Tip the oyster and juice into a strainer set over a bowl.

Mix the flour with some salt and pepper in a wide bowl. Place the beaten egg in another wide bowl, and the bread crumbs in a third. Toss the oysters in the seasoned flour and shake off any excess. Dip into the beaten egg, then coat evenly with the bread crumbs. Arrange on a plate and set aside.

Heat 1½ inches of oil in a small saucepan until hot. (A little piece of bread should sizzle vigorously when dropped in.) Fry the breaded oysters in two or three batches until evenly golden brown and crisp. This will take only a few seconds. Drain on a plate lined with paper towels. Serve immediately with the sauce gribiche.

Smoked trout pâté with horseradish cream and melba toasts

This easy, prepare-ahead first course is ideal for entertaining. Make the smoked trout pâté a day ahead and chill it. The melba toasts can be made several days earlier, as they store well in an airtight container. When your guests have arrived, all you need to do is to dress some salad leaves, garnish with cold smoked trout, and bring everything to the table.

SERVES 4

Smoked trout pâté:

8 ounces skinless hot-smoked trout fillets

½ cup crème fraîche

½ cup heavy cream

1 tablespoon cream-style horseradish

squeeze of lemon juice, to taste

small handful of fresh dillweed, 4 small fronds reserved for garnish and the rest chopped

For serving:

8 slices white or brown bread

8 slices cold-smoked trout

few handfuls of salad leaves

Put all the ingredients for the pâté into a food processor and pulse until well mixed. Leave the mixture coarse for a rustic texture. Season to taste with freshly ground black pepper, then spoon into individual ramekins or ceramic pots and garnish each with a frond of dill.

To make the melba toasts, preheat the broiler and toast the bread lightly on both sides. Cut off the crusts, then, holding the toast flat against a chopping board, slide the knife between the toasted edges to split the bread horizontally. Cut the split bread into triangles and arrange untoasted sides up on a baking sheet. Toast under the broiler until the triangles are golden and crisp and the edges have curled slightly.

Serve the individual pots of pâté with the melba toast and a couple of slices of smoked trout draped over a handful of salad leaves.

Whiting in piquant tomato sauce

This is one of the easiest and healthiest ways to cook fish. Make a delicious sauce, place the fish fillets on top, cover, and steam. The sauce can be made in advance, then the fish needs only a few minutes to cook. Saffron rice or crushed new potatoes are ideal accompaniments.

SERVES 4

4 whiting fillets, about 5 ounces each
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, minced
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 anchovy fillets in olive oil, minced
splash of dry white wine
½ cup fish or chicken stock (see Chapter 9) or water
14-ounce can crushed tomatoes
pinch of dried red-pepper flakes
½ teaspoon dried oregano
pinch of sugar
few dashes of hot-pepper sauce
fresh basil leaves for garnish
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Trim the fish fillets to neaten the edges, then remove any pin bones with a pair of kitchen tweezers.

Heat the oil in a wide, heavy-based pan over low to medium heat. Stir in the onion and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook until the onion begins to

soften, 4–6 minutes. Add the minced garlic and anchovy and fry for 1–2 minutes longer. Pour in a splash of white wine and let it simmer until the pan is quite dry, then stir in the stock, tomatoes, pepper flakes, and oregano. Let simmer until the tomatoes have broken down and the sauce has thickened, about 30 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a pinch of sugar and hot-pepper sauce to taste.

Season the fish fillets with salt and pepper, then lower into the pan of tomato sauce and cover with a tight-fitting lid. Steam the fish over medium heat until it is just firm and opaque, 3–4 minutes.

Lift the fish out with a slotted spatula. Serve with generous spoonfuls of the tomato sauce and a sprinkling of basil leaves.

Stuffed bream wrapped with bacon

Stuffing fish with forcemeat, or in my case sausage, is a classic idea that even featured in Mrs. Beeton's recipes in the 1800s. I find wrapping the bream with thin slices of bacon not only holds in the stuffing, but also imparts a smoky and savory flavor to the fish.

SERVES 2

2 small, whole bream, or similar fish such as porgy (scup), scaled and gutted

20 slices of bacon

olive oil for drizzling

few sprigs of fresh thyme

4 garlic cloves, skin on, halved

lemon wedges for serving (optional)

Forcemeat:

7 ounces fresh, bulk pork sausage (or pork sausage links with casing removed)

leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme

small handful each of fresh flat-leaf parsley and chives, chopped

pinch of cayenne pepper

few drops of lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Mix all the ingredients for the forcemeat and set aside.

Clean the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Rub all over with a little salt and pepper, then stuff the gutted cavities of each bream with the forcemeat.

For each fish, take 10 bacon slices and lay them out in chevrons on a cutting board, crossing each pair over at the base of its “V.” Put the fish in the middle and wrap the bacon around it to secure the forcemeat, alternating left and right.

Place the fish in a shallow roasting pan. Drizzle some olive oil over the fish and scatter sea salt, thyme, and garlic halves on top. Bake until the bacon is golden brown and crisp and the fish is cooked through, 25–30 minutes, turning the fish over halfway through the cooking. Serve with lemon wedges, if you like.



Thai-style fishcakes with sweet chili sauce

These light and flavorsome fishcakes are so easy to make, and they don't need to be coated in bread crumbs. Authentic Thai recipes include minced yard-long beans, which you can find in Asian markets and some supermarkets, but tender young green beans make a good alternative, and they don't require blanching. You can buy sweet chili sauce in the supermarket, but the best one will be the one you make yourself.

SERVES 4

8 ounces skinless white fish fillets, such as hake, whiting, or pollack
8 ounces peeled shrimp, deveined and roughly chopped
1 tablespoon Thai red curry paste (to make this yourself, see Chapter 3)
½ cup coconut milk
finely grated zest of 1 lime
small handful of cilantro, minced
2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 teaspoon palm or light brown sugar
2 ounces fine green beans, very finely sliced into rounds (about ½ cup)
1 scallion, finely sliced into rounds
2–3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
peanut or sunflower oil for frying

Sweet chili sauce:

⅓ cup sugar
3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, roughly chopped
small handful of cilantro leaves

3 long, fresh, red chili peppers, deseeded and roughly chopped
juice of 1 large lime
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 tablespoon light soy sauce

First, make the chili sauce. Place the sugar in a small, heavy-based saucepan with 3–4 tablespoons of water. Stir to dissolve the sugar, then bring to a boil and boil until the syrup has caramelized to a light golden color, 5–8 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the garlic, ginger, cilantro leaves, chili peppers, and lime juice in a food processor and blitz to a coarse paste. When the sugar syrup has reached a light golden caramel color, carefully add the wet paste (stand back, because the caramel will sputter and spit). Stir in the fish and soy sauces. Return to a simmer, stirring frequently to dissolve any caramel that has hardened, then immediately take the pan off the heat. Let cool completely before spooning into individual dipping bowls.

To make the fishcakes, cut the fish into rough chunks, discarding any bones you come across, then put in a food processor with the shrimp. Add the curry paste, coconut milk, lime zest, cilantro, fish sauce, sugar, and a little salt and pepper. Pulse to a rough and sticky paste—don't over-process the fish—then transfer to a bowl and stir in the chopped green beans and scallion.

Put the flour into a shallow dish. Divide the fish mixture into 12 or 16 pieces. With wet hands, roll each piece into a ball, then flatten into a round patty and coat lightly with flour. Heat 1 inch of oil in a wide frying pan and fry the fishcakes in batches until golden brown, 1–1½ minutes on each side. As the fishcakes are cooked, drain on paper towels. Serve the fishcakes warm, with the sweet chili sauce for dipping.



Clams with bacon

This first course is a regular feature on my pub menus. Serve with crusty bread on the side to soak up the savory juices.

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE

4½ pounds littleneck clams

2 tablespoons olive oil

8 ounces slab bacon, cut into thick 1½-inch chunks

few sprigs of fresh thyme

splash of dry white wine

squeeze of lemon juice (optional)

Wash the clams and discard any that do not shut tightly when gently tapped.

Place a large, heavy-based pan (with lid) over medium heat. Add the oil, bacon, and thyme and fry until the bacon is golden brown around the edges, 4–5 minutes. Pour off excess fat, if you like. Increase the heat, pour in a splash of white wine, and immediately tip in the clams. Give the pan a shake, then cover. Let the clams steam until they have opened, 3–4 minutes. (Discard any clams that remain closed.)

Grind some black pepper over the clams and add a squeeze of lemon juice, if you like. You probably won't need to add salt, because the clams and bacon are already salty. Divide the clams, bacon, and pan juices among warm bowls and serve at once.

Sea bass with olives, tomatoes, and fennel

This is a delicious and healthy way of cooking whole sea bass. It takes me back to my younger days, when I worked aboard a luxury yacht as a private chef. I made elegant and sophisticated dishes for the guests, but staff meals had to be quick, easy, and satisfying. Dishes like this one made me very popular among the crew. Serve with new potatoes on the side.

SERVES 4

2 whole, small sea bass, about 1 pound each, scaled and gutted

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra to rub over the fish

1 large or 2 medium fennel bulbs, thinly sliced

splash of dry white wine

10 plum or Roma tomatoes, peeled and roughly chopped

½ cup sliced black olives

handful of fresh basil or dillweed, roughly chopped

Clean the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Score the fish several times on each side, then rub all over with olive oil. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Heat the oil in a stovetop-to-oven casserole that is wide enough to hold the fish side by side. Add the fennel and a little seasoning. Sauté the fennel until it begins to soften, about 5 minutes. Pour in a generous splash of wine, then stir in the tomatoes and olives. Scatter half of the basil over the sauce, then rest the sea bass on top.

Transfer the casserole to the oven and bake until the fish is just cooked through, 15–20 minutes: It should be opaque at the thickest part of the flesh. Serve the fish and sauce straight from the casserole.

Broiled herring with harissa

Harissa is traditionally made with soaked dried chili peppers, garlic, various ground spices, mint, and olive oil. I prefer to make mine with fresh chilies, sweet roasted red bell peppers, and a splash of vinegar to give the sauce a fresh zing—a perfect contrast to rich, oily fish such as herring. Any extra harissa will keep well in the refrigerator, covered with a thin layer of olive oil.

SERVES 4

Broiled herring:

4 whole herring, scaled and gutted
olive oil
1 lemon, thinly sliced
squeeze of lemon juice
plain yogurt for serving

Harissa:

3 large, fresh, red chili peppers
1 roasted red bell pepper in brine, drained
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
pinch of saffron strands
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon red-wine vinegar
3 tablespoons olive oil
pinch of sugar (optional)

Lightly score the herring on both sides, then season all over with salt and pepper. Oil a baking sheet and arrange the lemon slices on it in one layer. Place the fish on top of the lemon slices. Drizzle a little olive oil and lemon juice over the fish. Sprinkle with a little more seasoning. Refrigerate while you prepare the sauce.

Split the chili peppers in half lengthwise and scrape off the seeds. Roughly chop the flesh and put it into a small food processor or blender. Core, deseed, and roughly chop the roasted red bell pepper. Add to the chilies. Put the rest of the harissa ingredients, except the sugar, into the food processor with a little seasoning to taste. Blitz until smooth, stopping the machine once or twice to scrape down the sides of the processor bowl. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a pinch of sugar as necessary, to balance out the flavor.

When ready to cook, preheat the broiler. Place the herring under the broiler, 4–5 inches from the heat source, and cook for about 3 minutes on each side. Transfer to warm plates and serve immediately, with the harissa and some plain yogurt on the side.

Red mullet with tomatoes, olives, and anchovies

This is a beautifully simple dish with Mediterranean flavors. Ask your fish merchant to “butterfly” the fish so that each fish is boned and opened out flat, its two fillets still held together by its skin—unless, of course, you want to attempt this yourself.

SERVES 4

4 large red mullet, or similar fish such as spotted goatfish, about 10 ounces each, scaled, gutted, and butterflied

¼ cup olive oil

1 heaped cup cherry tomatoes, halved

¾ cup sliced black olives

3 anchovies in olive oil

squeeze of lemon juice

handful of fresh basil, leaves roughly chopped

Clean the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Heat a large frying pan with the oil until hot. Season the fish and fry for 1½ minutes, skin-side down. Turn over and cook the other side for 1–1½ minutes. Remove to a plate and keep warm.

Tip the cherry tomatoes into the pan and add the olives and anchovies. Toss over high heat for a couple of minutes, adding a squeeze of lemon juice, cooking until the tomatoes have softened slightly. Toss in the basil and immediately divide among warm serving plates. Place the fish on top, skin-side up, and serve at once.





Fisherman's stew

The variety of seafood here adds to the complexity of the stew. You could keep to just two types—a firm white fish with some clams, perhaps—but the crabmeat enriches and thickens the sauce at the end and is well worth including. Lots of good crusty bread is a must, and the stew is also delicious ladled over pasta or with boiled new potatoes.

SERVES 4

1 pound littleneck clams

1 pound mussels

½ cup dry white wine or Noilly Prat

**1 bouquet garni (1 bay leaf, sprig each of fresh parsley and thyme, and
2 blades of mace tied together)**

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 large leeks, finely sliced

1 medium fennel bulb, finely sliced

3 cups fish stock (see Chapter 9)

pinch of saffron strands

½ cup heavy cream

8 ounces large raw shrimp

14 ounces plaice or flounder fillet, skin on, cut in bite-size chunks

1 cup packed crabmeat

small handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Wash the clams and mussels; discard any that do not shut tightly when gently tapped. Put the wine and bouquet garni in a large, heavy-based pot (with a tight-fitting lid) and bring to a boil. As soon as the wine starts to

boil, tip in the clams and mussels. Give the mixture a stir, then cover and steam until the clams and mussels have opened, 2–3 minutes.

Tip the shellfish into a colander set over a large bowl to collect the liquid. Discard the bouquet garni.

Return the pot to the heat and add the olive oil, leeks, and fennel. Sauté for 4–5 minutes, then pour in the liquid from the clams and mussels. Add the fish stock and saffron and bring to a simmer. Let cook until reduced by a third, then pour in the cream.

Meanwhile, extract most of the clams and mussels from their shells, discarding any that have not opened. Reserve a few of each in their shells to use for garnish.

About 5 minutes before you are ready to serve, bring the broth back to a simmer. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes, then add the chunks of fish and crabmeat. Poach just until the fish turns opaque, about 1 minute. Return the clams and mussels to the pot to warm through. Remove the pot from the heat. Ladle the stew into warmed bowls and garnish with a little chopped parsley.

Poached halibut with creamy white wine and tarragon sauce

Halibut has a delicate flavor, and is perfectly matched with this creamy white wine and tarragon sauce. The sauce can be made in advance, but I wouldn't bother to precook the fish—after all, it doesn't take long to poach, and you'll need a few minutes to reheat the sauce and prepare any side dishes. To complete the meal, serve with root vegetables and some wilted spinach.

SERVES 4

Poached halibut:

1 bay leaf
few sprigs of fresh thyme
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
½ lemon, sliced into rounds
large pinch of rock salt
4 skinless, boneless halibut fillets, about 5 ounces each

White wine and tarragon sauce:

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 large shallots, minced
½ cup dry white wine
1¼ cups fish stock (see Chapter 9)
1 cup heavy cream
lemon juice to taste
handful of fresh tarragon, leaves chopped

First, make the sauce. Heat the oil in a medium saucepan and add the shallots and some seasoning. Sweat the shallots until soft without coloring, 5–6 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the white wine and let it boil until the pan is quite dry.

Add the fish stock, bring to a boil, and reduce by half. Finally, pour in the cream, bring back to a boil, and cook until reduced to a thick but still pourable consistency. Strain through a sieve into a clean pan. Adjust the seasoning with salt, pepper, and a little lemon juice and keep warm. Stir in the tarragon leaves just before serving.

To poach the halibut, put all the aromatics into a large saucepan and half fill the pan with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer. Season the fish with salt and pepper, then lower into the liquid. Gently poach until the fish is opaque and just firm, 8–10 minutes.

Carefully remove the halibut fillets with a slotted spatula and dab dry with paper towels. Place on warmed plates and spoon the white wine and tarragon sauce over the fish.



Deviled mackerel with tomato and fennel salad and horseradish potatoes

In my opinion, we don't eat enough mackerel, which is a shame as it is full of healthy fats. The "deviled" butter in this recipe gives the fish a sweet, smoky, and slightly spicy edge. You could also use it with mackerel fillets, which will obviously need less time to cook than whole fish. Tomato and fennel salad and horseradish potatoes are fantastic accompaniments.

SERVES 4

4 whole mackerel, scaled and gutted

½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened to room temperature

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons sweet smoked paprika

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 tablespoon sugar

½ teaspoon dry English mustard

2 teaspoons red-or white-wine vinegar

Horseradish potatoes:

1 pound small boiling potatoes, washed and halved if large

2 shallots, minced

2 tablespoons sour cream

2 tablespoons cream-style horseradish

few sprigs of fresh dillweed, roughly chopped

Tomato and fennel salad:

1 large fennel bulb

2 ripe plum or Roma tomatoes

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves roughly chopped
few sprigs of fresh dillweed, roughly chopped
½ teaspoon sugar
juice of ½ lemon
3 tablespoons olive oil

First, make the horseradish potatoes: Cook the potatoes (skin on) in boiling salted water until tender when pierced with a sharp knife, 10–12 minutes. Drain and tip into a large bowl. Let cool slightly, then stir in the shallots, sour cream, and horseradish. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Finally, fold in the dill. Set aside to serve warm or at room temperature.

For the fennel salad, trim off the base of the fennel, then shave into very thin slices using a mandoline. Immerse the slices in a bowl of ice water and let crisp up for about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the tomatoes into thin wedges. Put the tomatoes into a large bowl. Drain the fennel and add to the bowl along with the chopped herbs. Mix together the sugar, lemon juice, olive oil, and some seasoning for the dressing. Pour it over the tomatoes and fennel and mix well. Let the flavors infuse for 10–15 minutes before serving.

Heat the broiler. Slash each mackerel on both sides, making the cuts every ¾ inch or so, then place in a baking dish. Mix all the remaining ingredients together in a bowl to make a thick spiced butter, seasoning well with salt and pepper. Rub the butter all over the mackerel, including inside the cavity. If the butter firms up on contact with the chilled fish and you find it difficult to spread, then slightly melt it in a saucepan and pour it over the fish instead.

Broil the mackerel, 4–5 inches from the heat source, until the fish is just firm and cooked through, 4–5 minutes on each side.

Serve immediately with the tomato and fennel salad and the horseradish potatoes.





Grilled scallop and shrimp brochettes with cilantro-chili butter

These are lovely, and fun to eat with your fingers. Take care not to overcook the scallops and shrimp or they'll turn rubbery. The recipe makes more cilantro-chili butter than you need, but it keeps for about a week in the refrigerator and is also good with grilled meats and fish.

SERVES 4

Scallop and shrimp brochettes:

2–3 tablespoons olive oil

sprig of fresh rosemary, leaves minced

small handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

grated zest and juice of ½ lemon

12 sea scallops

12 large raw shrimp, peeled and deveined

Cilantro-chili butter:

½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened to room temperature

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

1 small, fresh, red chili pepper, deseeded and minced

small handful of cilantro, leaves chopped

1 large garlic clove, finely crushed

First, prepare the cilantro-chili butter. Place all the ingredients in a bowl along with a generous seasoning of salt and pepper. Beat with a fork until well combined. Spoon the butter along the length of a large sheet of plastic wrap and roll up in the wrap to shape the butter into a log. Holding the sides

of the wrap, roll the log on the work surface to even out the thickness. Refrigerate for a few hours until firm.

Soak 12 bamboo skewers in cold water for about 20 minutes. This will help to prevent them from burning too quickly during grilling.

Mix the olive oil, chopped herbs, and lemon zest and juice together in a bowl. Thread two scallops and two shrimp alternately on each soaked skewer, then brush with the lemon and herb marinade. Place the skewers on a tray, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 20–30 minutes.

Prepare the barbecue or heat a cast-iron grill pan until hot. Season the scallops and shrimp with salt and pepper. Grill over coals or on the hot pan until the scallops and shrimp are opaque and lightly charred, 1½–2 minutes on each side. During cooking, baste occasionally with any leftover marinade. Remove to a serving plate and top with slices of the cilantro-chili butter. Serve immediately.





meat and poultry

While we may use expensive cuts of meat and poultry in the restaurants, at home I'm more interested in cooking with less popular cuts. It is more exciting and challenging to convert cheap cuts of meat or ordinary chicken legs into something appealing and scrumptious than it is to grill a filet mignon. The cheaper cuts usually require slow-cooking methods, such as poaching, braising, and stewing, to tenderize them. A long and gentle cooking process is also an opportunity to infuse the meat with extra flavor.

As you can see from this chapter, I sometimes like to add a sweet element to meat and poultry dishes. Fresh or dried fruit can help to cut the richness of the meat.

Poached rabbit legs with gremolata

Pork tenderloin stroganoff

Homemade bangers

Classic mixed grill

Angus beef olives

Chicken legs with braised peas and onions

Goat curry

Roast loin of pork with apple sauce

Sweet potato and duck rösti with fried duck eggs

Honey-roast ham

Cider and honey roast leg of lamb

Lamb shank cassoulet

Roast rib-eye with caramelized shallot and red wine gravy

Lamb stew with bacon, sweet onions, and prunes

Braised chicken legs with honey and five-spice

Duck breasts with port and cherry sauce

Poached rabbit legs with gremolata

Rabbit legs benefit from slow cooking, and this is also one of the simplest ways to cook them—gently poached in a light and delicate broth. For a deeper-flavored broth, use homemade chicken stock instead of water. You could also add chunks of potatoes or some pearl barley to bulk up the dish for a rustic one-pot meal. Serve with warm chunks of baguette or pain de campagne.

SERVES 4

4 rabbit legs (hindquarters)
2 large carrots, cut into large chunks
1 Spanish or mild onion, roughly chopped
1 large leek, cut into large chunks
2 celery ribs, cut into large chunks
½ head of garlic, cut horizontally
handful of fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
½ teaspoon coriander seeds

Gremolata:

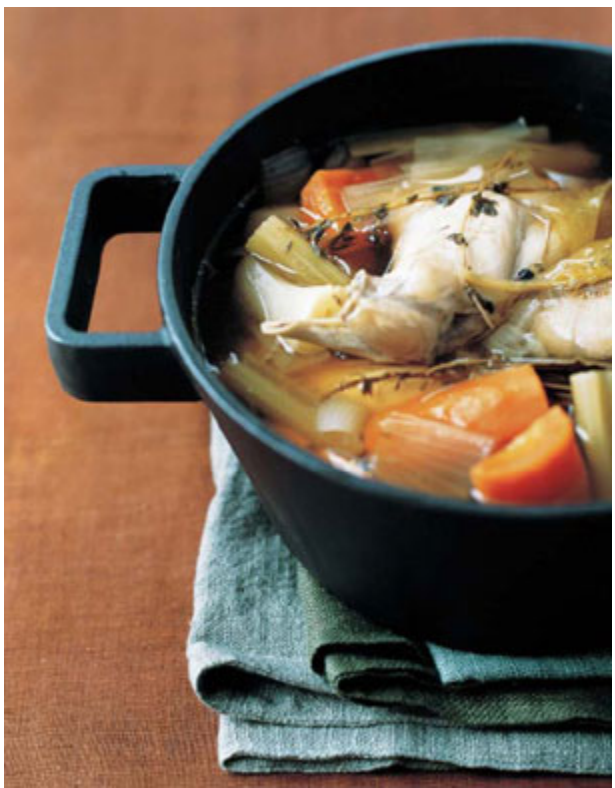
½ cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely grated
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Season the rabbit legs well and put them in a cast-iron or other heavy-based casserole. Arrange the vegetables, garlic, herbs, and spices on top and fill

with cold water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and place a lid on top. Gently simmer until the meat is tender and comes off the bone easily, 50–60 minutes. Try not to overcook, or the meat will become quite dry.

To make the gremolata, mix the olive oil, garlic, lemon zest and juice, and chopped parsley together in a bowl. Season well with salt and pepper to taste.

When ready, remove the rabbit legs to a warm plate and let rest for a few minutes. Scoop the vegetables into warmed bowls. Pull the meat off the rabbit legs in large pieces, then divide among the bowls. Pour a ladleful of hot broth into each. Finally, spoon the gremolata over the rabbit legs and vegetables and serve immediately.



Pork tenderloin stroganoff

This is a lovely, unfussy dish to make for supper. Serve with buttered pasta or fluffy steamed rice.

SERVES 4

1 pound pork tenderloin
1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika, plus an extra pinch
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely sliced
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
7 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced (about 3 cups)
splash of brandy
½ cup sour cream or heavy cream
squeeze of lemon juice
handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

Trim off any fat or sinew from the pork tenderloin, then slice thinly. Season with salt, pepper, and 1 teaspoon of paprika.

Heat half of the olive oil in a wide frying pan until hot. Add the onion and fry over medium heat, stirring frequently, until soft and translucent, 6–8 minutes. Add the garlic and mushrooms and increase the heat slightly. Fry until the mushrooms are tender, 3–4 minutes. Tip the contents of the pan onto a plate and set aside.

Add the remaining oil to the pan and fry the pork over high heat until golden brown, 1½–2 minutes. Return the onions, garlic, and mushrooms to

the pan. Add a splash of brandy and let it boil, or flambé, until almost all reduced. Stir in the cream and bring to a gentle simmer. Adjust the seasoning with a little more salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon juice. Throw in the chopped parsley and remove the pan from the heat. Serve immediately, sprinkled with a pinch of paprika.

Homemade bangers

I admit that it takes a bit of effort to make your own “bangers” (link sausages), but the flavor and texture are superlative. For the ground pork, I like to use an equal amount of fresh belly and shoulder or leg meat. As homemade bangers are free from preservatives, eat them as soon as they are made (or you can freeze them). Serve on a bed of mustard mash with onion gravy.

MAKES ABOUT 20

sausage casings (enough to make 20 large link sausages)

juice of ½ lemon

1 large Spanish or mild onion, minced

3 large garlic cloves, minced

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra to fry the sausages

2¼ pounds ground pork

1 cup fresh bread crumbs, lightly toasted

large handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped

handful of fresh lemon thyme, leaves stripped

6 large, fresh sage leaves, minced

finely grated zest of 2 lemons

2 teaspoons fine sea salt

2–3 teaspoons cracked black peppercorns, to taste

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

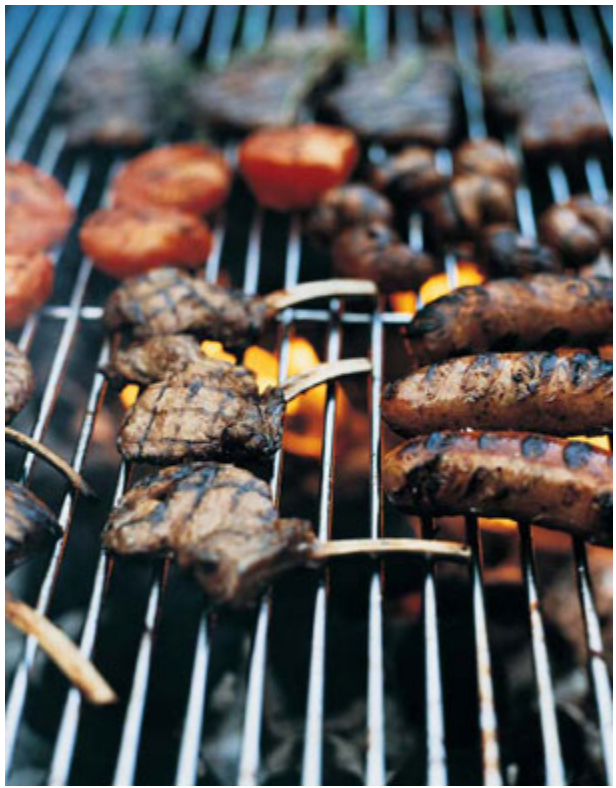
First, rinse the casings under cold running water for 5–10 minutes (keep a good hold on the slippery things). Then let soak in a bowl of water with the lemon juice for about 30 minutes.

Sweat the onion and garlic in the olive oil with some seasoning until soft, 6–8 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool completely. Mix in the rest of the ingredients—it's probably easiest to use your hands to do this.

Drain the casings and squeeze out any excess water. Pat dry with paper towels. If you don't have a sausage-stuffer or stuffing tube on a meat grinder, push the end of a funnel (or a pastry bag fitted with a plain round tip) through one end of the casing and keep threading on the casing until you get to the other end, where you tie a knot. Now squeeze or push the filling through the casing, trying not to tear it along the way. Keep stuffing until you end up with a long coil. (You'll need another pair of hands to help with this.) Next, twist 4- to 5-inch lengths of the sausage in alternate directions to make individual sausages. Cut and separate the sausages just before cooking.

Gently fry the sausages in a lightly oiled nonstick pan for 15–20 minutes, turning them occasionally. Use very low heat to ensure that the sausage remains succulent. Do not pierce the skins, because this would only let the juices to escape.





Classic mixed grill

The simplicity of a mixed grill makes it perfect for outdoor entertaining. All you need to complete the al fresco meal are a few large bowls of salads and some bread.

SERVES 6–8

12 homemade bangers (see Chapter 4) or good-quality fresh pork link sausages

olive oil for brushing

12 large tomatoes, halved

12 cremini mushrooms, cleaned and stems removed

12 thick slices of lean bacon

1½ pounds blood sausage (about 12 links)

12 small lamb chops, bone-in, about 4 ounces each

2½ pounds boneless sirloin steak, about ½-inch thick, cut into 12 portions

12 lamb kidneys, halved

few sprigs of watercress for garnish

Heat the oven to 350°F. Put the bangers in a lightly oiled roasting pan and cook in the oven until they are golden and just cooked through, 15–20 minutes, turning them over halfway. Set aside.

Prepare the barbecue.

First, cook the tomatoes and mushrooms: Place the tomatoes (cut-side up) and the mushrooms (gill-side up) on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Drizzle

some olive oil over them and season well with salt and pepper. Place the baking sheet on the grill and cook until the tomatoes are just soft and the mushrooms are golden brown, 5–7 minutes, turning the vegetables over halfway through the cooking. Transfer to a large, warm platter and keep warm, preferably in a low oven, or simply covered with a piece of foil.

Place the bacon and bangers on the grill. Cook for 2–2½ minutes on each side, turning them occasionally. Brush the blood sausages with a little oil, add to the grill, and cook for 2–3 minutes on each side. Remove them all to a large platter and keep warm.

Brush the lamb chops, steaks, and kidneys with olive oil and season well with salt and pepper. Grill them in batches: The lamb chops will take 1–1½ minutes on each side for medium rare; the steaks need only 40–50 seconds per side; and the kidney halves require about a minute on each side. As the meats are grilled, transfer to another warm platter. Let the meats rest a little, then garnish the platters with watercress and serve.

Angus beef olives

These are a reminder of my Scottish roots. When I was young, beef olives were a real treat, even though the stuffing then was made with bread crumbs, herbs, and suet. Beef sausage is perfect for stuffing olives, giving this traditional dish a slightly upmarket feel. Serve some mashed potatoes and green beans on the side.

SERVES 4

4 thin slices of beef cut from the top or bottom round (sometimes called beef rolls by butchers), each about 7 ounces and cut $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch thick

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon butter

1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons tomato paste

½ cup dry red wine

1½ cups beef stock (see Chapter 9)

Stuffing:

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, minced

1 celery rib, minced

8 ounces fresh bulk beef sausage

1 cup fresh bread crumbs

leaves stripped from a few sprigs of fresh thyme

handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

1 extra-large egg for binding

First, begin the stuffing. Heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the onion and celery, stirring frequently, until they are soft but not browned, 4–6 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and let cool.

Meanwhile, pound the beef slices between two layers of parchment paper using a meat mallet or a rolling pin. This helps to tenderize the meat, but be careful not to create any splits in the beef.

Once the onion and celery have cooled, mix in the sausage, bread crumbs, herbs, and egg to bind. Add a little seasoning. With wet hands, divide the mixture into four and roll each portion into a neat oval. Lay a stuffing portion on one end of a flattened beef slice and roll up into a neat log. Tie and secure the log with kitchen string, then enclose in plastic wrap. Holding both ends of the wrap, roll the log on the work surface to even out the shape. Make three more olives with the remaining beef and stuffing. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to let the beef olives firm up slightly.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Heat a thin layer of olive oil in a wide frying pan. Unwrap the beef olives, season lightly, and fry until browned all over. Transfer to a large baking dish. Return the pan to the heat. Add the butter and flour and stir for a minute, then blend in the tomato paste. Take the pan off the heat and gradually stir in the wine. Return to the heat, pour in the stock, and bring to a boil. Stir over high heat until the sauce is smooth and has thickened slightly. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Pour the sauce over the beef olives and cover the baking dish loosely with a piece of foil. Put the dish in the oven and cook for 1 hour. Remove the foil and return to the oven to cook until the beef olives are tender, about 30 minutes longer. Turn the olives over halfway through the cooking. Remove the kitchen string, cut into thick slices, and serve with the sauce.

Chicken legs with braised peas and onions

Mark Sargeant, my head chef at Claridge's, in London, and general right-hand man, considers this his most favorite dish. The braised peas and onions are similar to *petits pois à la française*, a French classic that even featured on Mark's retro menu for his wedding reception—served with homemade sausages and mash.

SERVES 4

Chicken legs:

4 large, free-range chicken legs, each 10–12 ounces

2 tablespoons olive oil

small handful of fresh thyme sprigs

1 fat garlic clove, skin on, lightly crushed

1½ tablespoons butter

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup water

Braised peas and onions:

2 tablespoons butter

7 ounces pearl onions, peeled (about 1½ cups)

few sprigs of fresh thyme

4 cups green peas, thawed if frozen

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup water

1 romaine heart, shredded

Trim any excess fat from the chicken legs. Heat the oil in a large frying pan until hot. Season the chicken legs all over with salt and pepper, then fry

until golden brown, about 2 minutes on each side. Add the thyme, garlic, butter, and water to the pan. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover the pan, and braise until the chicken legs are tender, 30–40 minutes. Turn the legs over halfway through the cooking.

About 15 minutes before the chicken is ready, melt the butter in another pan and tip in the onions. Toss well and cook over medium to low heat, stirring frequently, until the onions are tender, 8–10 minutes. Add the thyme sprigs, peas, and water. Season well. Simmer until the peas are tender and most of the water has evaporated, 5–6 minutes. Add the lettuce and stir until just wilted, about 1 minute longer.

Spread the braised peas and onions on a large serving platter and arrange the glazed chicken legs on top. Serve immediately.



Goat curry

This is a light, piquant, and flavorful curry inspired by the Caribbean goat curries I used to enjoy during the Notting Hill carnival in London. Here, chicken stock or water take the place of yogurt or coconut milk (both staples in South Asian and Southeast Asian curries). The list of ingredients may seem long, but don't let this daunt you—you most likely have all the vegetables and spices in your kitchen. Serve the goat curry with plain steamed rice.

SERVES 4

2¼ pounds boneless goat shoulder (or other braising cut)

3 tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

½ teaspoon ground cumin or seeds

½ teaspoon mustard seeds

1 cinnamon stick

2 star anise

4 cardamom pods, lightly crushed

1 teaspoon brown sugar

few curry leaves (optional)

14-ounce can crushed tomatoes in juice

1¾ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9) or water

handful of cilantro leaves for garnish

Chili paste:

1 small onion, roughly chopped

4 garlic cloves, peeled

4 small, fresh, hot chili peppers, deseeded and roughly chopped

1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, chopped

1/8 teaspoon fine sea salt

3 tablespoons peanut oil

To make the chili paste, put all the ingredients into a small food processor and blitz to a fine paste. Stop the machine and scrape down the sides of the bowl two or three times to be sure it is all evenly ground. Scrape the paste into a small bowl and set aside.

Cut the goat shoulder into small, bite-size chunks and season with salt and pepper. Heat half the oil in a wide saucepan. Fry the meat in two batches until golden brown all over. As each batch is browned, remove to a plate and set aside. Tip the chili paste into the pan and stir over medium heat until fragrant, 2–3 minutes. Add the dried spices, sugar, and curry leaves, if using. Continue to stir for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and stock to the pan and stir well. Reduce the heat to the lowest setting, cover the pan, and cook gently until the meat is just tender, 3–4 hours.

Remove the lid and skim off the excess oil on top. Gently simmer until the curry has reduced and thickened slightly, 20–30 minutes longer. The meat should be very tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then serve garnished with cilantro.



Roast loin of pork with apple sauce

In Britain, we like to roast pork with the skin on. After cooking, the skin—called crackling—is deliciously crunchy. The secret to good crackling is to ensure that the pork skin is dry and well-scored. As the skin is tough you may struggle to score it. I use a clean, sharp craft knife for this, although a sharp cook's knife will also do the job. Also, make sure the oven is very hot when you put the pork in so the skin starts sizzling quickly.

SERVES 6–8

3-pound boneless pork loin roast, skin on if possible

few sprigs of fresh rosemary, leaves chopped

2 large garlic cloves, chopped

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, sliced

olive oil for drizzling

Apple sauce:

1 pound tart cooking apples

1½ tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon lemon juice

4–5 tablespoons sugar

Preheat the oven to its highest setting, about 500°F. Remove the butcher's strings if the pork loin is tied. Pat the skin of the pork dry with paper towels, then score it in a crisscross pattern, spacing the cuts $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart. Turn the pork loin over meat-side up. Cut a slit along the thick side of the loin, without cutting all the way through, to open it out like a book.

Mix the chopped rosemary, garlic, lemon zest, olive oil, and a generous seasoning of salt and pepper in a small bowl. Stir well, then spread the mixture over the pork loin. Sprinkle with a little more salt and pepper. Roll up the loin and secure tightly with kitchen string at 1½-inch intervals. Rub the scored skin with a large pinch of salt.

Scatter the onion over the bottom of a roasting pan. Set the pork on top, skin-side up. Drizzle olive oil generously over the skin and sprinkle with another large pinch of salt. Place in the oven and roast until the skin is golden and starting to crisp, about 20 minutes.

Turn down the oven to 350°F and roast the pork until it is just cooked through, 30–40 minutes longer. To test, insert a metal skewer into the thickest part of the loin and press gently: the juices that run out should be clear. (I prefer to serve pork just slightly pink to retain its succulence and moisture.) Let rest for 10–15 minutes before carving.

Make the apple sauce while the pork is roasting: Peel, quarter, and core the apples. Roughly chop the quarters. Put them in a medium saucepan with the butter, lemon juice, 4 tablespoons of sugar, and a splash of water. Cover the pan and cook over low heat for about 15 minutes. Lift the lid and give the apples a stir every now and then, adding a little more water if the pan looks too dry. When the apples have broken down into a purée, taste for sweetness and add a little more sugar to taste. Adjust the consistency with a little more hot water as necessary. Serve warm with the roast pork.



Sweet potato and duck rösti with fried duck eggs

Sweet potato with tender duck meat is a fabulous combination, and the soft, runny yolks of duck eggs bring the dish together. Serve this with a sharply dressed salad on the side to contrast with the sweetness and richness of the main dish.

SERVES 4

2 confit duck legs, each about 5 ounces

2 medium sweet potatoes, about 8 ounces in total

2 extra-large egg whites

1 tablespoon cornstarch

little olive oil for cooking

4 fresh duck eggs

Scrape off the fat from the duck legs and peel off the skin. Pull the meat off the bones and shred into small pieces. Place in a large bowl. Peel and coarsely grate the sweet potatoes over the bowl. Add the egg whites, cornstarch, and a pinch each of salt and pepper and mix well.

Heat a drizzle of olive oil in a wide, nonstick pan. Spoon three or four neat piles of the sweet potato-duck mixture in the pan and press down to flatten them and form thin patties. Fry over low to medium heat until golden brown, 4–5 minutes. Flip over and cook the other side for the same amount of time. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels and keep warm. Repeat with the remaining sweet potato-duck mixture.

While the last batch of rösti is cooking, heat a little oil in another frying pan (or several blini pans). Fry the duck eggs until the egg whites are set but the yolk is still runny in the middle, 1–2 minutes.

Stack two potato and duck rösti on each of four warm serving plates and top each with a fried duck egg. Serve immediately.





Honey-roast ham

A large, glazed ham need not be confined to a holiday feast. Make it the next time you have a big gathering of family or friends. You will probably need to order the ham in advance from a good butcher or specialty food store.

SERVES 8–10

½ unsmoked country-cured ham, bone in, about 10 pounds, soaked overnight

1 large carrot, halved

1 large onion, quartered

2 celery ribs, cut into large chunks

1 bay leaf

few sprigs of fresh thyme

1 teaspoon black peppercorns

about 50 whole cloves

For the glaze:

½ cup honey

½ cup Demerara or Turbinado sugar

¼ cup Madeira wine

3 tablespoons soy sauce

3 tablespoons English mustard

2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Cumberland sauce:

1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, finely grated

3 tablespoons port

1/3 cup red-currant jelly
1½ cups fresh cranberries
small pinch of cayenne pepper
juice of ½ orange
finely grated zest of 1 large orange
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
1 piece of stem ginger in syrup, finely sliced into matchsticks

Find a pot large enough to hold the ham and put it inside. Add the carrot, onion, and celery, and fill with cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat to a simmer. Scoop off any scum that rises to the surface of the liquid. Add the bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns. Simmer for 3–4 hours, replenishing the water level with boiling water as necessary. The ham is ready when the meat will come away from the bone easily.

Meanwhile, prepare the glaze. Put the honey and Demerara sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. When the mixture begins to foam, remove the pan from the heat and carefully pour in the Madeira. The sugar will spit and splatter, so take care not to burn your hands. If the sugar hardens, return the pan to the heat and stir until it dissolves again. Let cool slightly, then stir in the remaining ingredients. Cool completely.

Lift out the ham to a large roasting pan and let cool slightly. (If the stock is not too salty, keep it to make soup.) Preheat the oven to 325°F. Cut away the skin of the ham, leaving behind an even layer of fat. Score the fat all over in a crisscross pattern, then stud with whole cloves, pressing each into the middle of a scored diamond.

Brush the glaze over the ham. Bake for about 1 hour, basting frequently with the glaze. When nicely browned, remove from the oven and let rest for 15 minutes before carving.

For the Cumberland sauce, put the ginger, port, red-currant jelly, cranberries, cayenne, and orange juice into a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened and syrupy, 5–10 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the lemon and orange zests and the stem ginger. Transfer to a serving bowl and let cool completely. Serve with thin slices of honey-roast ham.

Cider and honey roast leg of lamb

Apples and cider go wonderfully with lamb. The apples break down during cooking and help thicken the sauce. Crisp roasted potatoes and steamed broccoli make the perfect accompaniments.

SERVES 6

1 leg of lamb, about 4½ pounds, fat trimmed
olive oil for drizzling
3–4 garlic cloves, skin on, halved
few sprigs of fresh thyme
juice of ½ lemon
4 tart cooking apples
2 cups hard cider
clear honey for drizzling
1¼ cups lamb or chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Calculate the cooking time for the lamb: 12 minutes per pound for medium rare, 15 minutes per pound for medium. Score the fat around the leg of lamb in a crisscross pattern. Drizzle a little olive oil over the fat, then rub all over with salt and pepper. Place in a deep roasting pan and scatter the garlic and thyme over and around the leg. Sprinkle with the lemon juice and drizzle on more olive oil. Sprinkle with a little more seasoning. Roast in the hot oven for 20 minutes.

Quarter and core the apples. Remove the lamb from the oven and reduce the heat to 350°F. Scatter the apples around the lamb, and baste the lamb with

the cider. Turn the leg over and drizzle on 2 tablespoons of honey. Roast for 30 minutes.

Turn the lamb around. Baste with the pan juices, then drizzle another tablespoon of honey over the meat. Continue to roast for the calculated time. To check for doneness, insert a skewer into the thickest part of the lamb, then press the meat lightly: the redder the juices, the rarer the meat. Lift the lamb onto a carving board and cover with a piece of foil. Let rest in a warm place while you prepare the gravy.

At this point, the apples and garlic in the roasting pan should be very soft. Press with a fork, then tip the entire contents of the pan into a fine sieve set over a saucepan. Push down with the back of a ladle to extract all the juices and flavor from the apples and garlic. Discard the pulp. Place the saucepan over medium heat and add the stock. Bring to a boil and let bubble vigorously until the sauce has thickened to the desired gravy consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then pour into a warm gravy boat. Carve the lamb into thin slices and serve with the apple and cider gravy.



Lamb shank cassoulet

This is my posh version of the classic French cassoulet, which was traditionally a layered casserole made with breast of lamb, salted pork, white beans, and Toulouse sausages. I'm using lamb shanks because I adore their fantastic flavor and texture. This recipe will satisfy four very hungry football players, or you could pull the meat off the shanks and serve the dish quite adequately to six. Serve with sautéed Savoy cabbage and chunks of rustic bread on the side.

SERVES 4–6

4 lamb shanks, each about 12 ounces

3 tablespoons olive oil

1/3 cup chopped lean bacon

2 Spanish or mild onions, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, chopped

2 tablespoons tomato paste

few sprigs of fresh thyme

2 bay leaves

1 cup dry white wine

4 cups lamb or chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

2 cans (16 ounces each) white beans, rinsed and drained

4–6 fresh Toulouse sausages

For serving:

2 tablespoons butter

1½ cups fresh bread crumbs

leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme

Season the lamb shanks with salt and pepper. Heat a cast-iron or heavy-based casserole with a thin layer of oil. Fry the lamb over medium heat until evenly browned all over, about 2 minutes on each side. Transfer to a large plate and set aside.

Add another tablespoon of oil to the pot and stir in the bacon. Fry for a few minutes until the bacon is golden brown. Add the onions and garlic and stir well. Cover the pot and sweat the onions until they are translucent, 4–6 minutes.

Remove the lid and add the tomato paste and herbs. Stir for a couple of minutes, then pour in the white wine. Let the wine boil until it has reduced by two-thirds. Pour in the stock and bring to a simmer. Return the lamb to the pot and put a crumpled piece of parchment paper on top. This will prevent any meat that pokes out of the liquid from drying out. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and gently simmer until the meat is tender and will come away from the bone easily, 2½–3 hours, turning the shanks over halfway through the cooking time.

Remove the shanks to a warm platter, cover with a piece of foil, and let rest. Skim off the excess fat from the surface of the braising liquid, then boil until reduced by more than half. Lower the heat, add the beans and sausages, and simmer until the sausages are cooked through, about 10 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. If necessary, return the lamb shanks to the pot and reheat them for a few minutes.

Melt the butter in a frying pan and tip in the bread crumbs, thyme leaves, and a little salt and pepper. Stir over medium heat until the bread crumbs are golden and crisp. Remove the pan from the heat.

Divide the lamb shanks among warm plates and spoon the beans, sausages, and sauce around them. Sprinkle with the crisp bread crumbs and serve immediately.



Roast rib-eye with caramelized shallot and red wine gravy

As with any roast, a great end result depends as much on the quality of the meat as on the cooking. Spend a little more on a good beef roast and you're halfway there. If you buy a bone-in rib-eye roast, choose one that weighs 4½ to 5½ pounds for this dish.

SERVES 6–8

3½- to 4½-pound boneless beef rib-eye roast, trimmed

2 tablespoons olive oil

large handful of fresh rosemary, leaves from a few sprigs chopped

Gravy:

2 large shallots, thinly sliced

1 garlic clove, crushed

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1–2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

⅔ cup red wine

2 cups beef stock (see Chapter 9)

few sprigs of fresh tarragon, leaves chopped

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Drizzle a little olive oil over the meat, then rub all over with salt, pepper, and the chopped rosemary. Put the beef, fat-side up, on a bed of rosemary sprigs in a large roasting pan. Roast for 20 minutes, then reduce the heat to 375°F. For medium-rare beef, continue roasting for 12 minutes per pound, or 18 minutes per pound if you prefer it medium. Turn the beef over halfway through the cooking. To check for doneness, insert a thin skewer and press lightly: the pinker the juice, the rarer the meat.

Remove the beef from the oven, transfer to a warm platter, and loosely cover with a piece of foil. Let rest for 15–20 minutes while you make the gravy.

Remove the rosemary sprigs from the roasting pan, then pour off all but about 2 tablespoons of the fat. Set the pan over medium heat. Add the shallots, garlic, and a little salt and pepper. Fry, stirring frequently, until the shallots begin to soften, 5–6 minutes. Increase the heat slightly and fry the shallots until they are golden and lightly caramelized. Add the flour and stir for a few minutes. Pour in the vinegar and red wine and stir well to mix. Pour in the stock and bring to a boil. Boil until the sauce has reduced and thickened to your liking, 10–15 minutes. Season to taste and stir in the tarragon.

Carve the beef thinly and serve with the gravy in a warm gravy boat.

Lamb stew with bacon, sweet onions, and prunes

I love the combination of flavors in this stew—sweet onions and prunes offset salty, smoky bacon to create a sweet and savory sauce for tender lamb. If you have some quince paste (*membrillo*), stir a couple of tablespoons into the stew to give it another dimension of flavor and sweetness. The stew is delicious served with creamy, buttery polenta or butternut squash purée.

SERVES 4–6

1 boneless leg of lamb (sirloin half), about 1½ pounds
2–3 tablespoons olive oil
8 ounces thick-sliced bacon or pancetta, chopped
1 large Spanish or mild onion, finely sliced
scant 1 cup pearl onions, peeled
½ tablespoon sugar
generous splash of dry white wine
1 cinnamon stick
1 teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons quince paste (optional)
⅔ cup soft pitted prunes, halved
2 cups lamb stock (see Chapter 9)

Trim off the fat and sinew from the leg of lamb and cut it into small chunks. Season with salt and pepper. Heat a thin layer of olive oil in a heavy-based pan or a cast-iron casserole until hot. Fry the lamb in several batches to avoid overcrowding the pan. The pieces should take about 2 minutes to brown on each side. As they are ready, remove to a plate and set aside.

Add a little more oil to the pan and fry the bacon until lightly browned, 3–4 minutes. Tip in the Spanish and pearl onions and cook, stirring frequently, until the onions begin to soften, 4–6 minutes. Add the sugar and a little more salt and pepper and cook until the onions have slightly caramelized, 2–3 minutes longer. Deglaze the pan with a generous splash of white wine, scraping the bottom with a wooden spoon to dislodge the sediment. Let the wine boil down until reduced to a sticky glaze.

Return the meat to the pan and stir in the cinnamon, ginger, quince paste (if using), and half the prunes. Pour in the stock and bring it to a gentle simmer. Cover the pan and turn the heat down to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour. Add the remaining prunes to the pan and cook until the lamb is very tender, about 30 minutes longer. Taste and adjust the seasoning before serving.

Braised chicken legs with honey and five-spice

This is a delicious and unusual chicken dish. I like to serve it with parsnip mash and wilted hearty greens on the side. You could also make this with duck—a good way to introduce children to this meat.

SERVES 4

4 free-range chicken legs
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns
1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
1–2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, finely sliced
1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
2 tablespoons clear honey
splash of dry white wine
1¾ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9)
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon water (optional)

Trim off the excess fat from around the chicken legs; set aside. Put the Sichuan peppercorns in a dry roasting pan and toss over high heat until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Tip into a mortar and add the five-spice powder and a generous seasoning of salt and pepper. Lightly grind the mixture with a pestle. Sprinkle the ground spices all over the chicken legs.

Heat a deep sauté pan with a little olive oil. Add the chicken legs and turn the heat down to medium. Cook until the legs are evenly browned, 3–4 minutes on each side. Remove them to a plate.

Add the onions and ginger to the pan with a little more oil, if needed. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened, 6–7 minutes. Add the honey and white wine. Simmer until the pan is quite dry and the wine and honey have reduced to a sticky glaze. Pour in the chicken stock and bring to a simmer.

Return the chicken legs to the sauté pan and braise until tender, 40–45 minutes, turning them over halfway through the cooking. If you prefer a thicker sauce, add the cornstarch mixture and simmer for a couple of minutes until thickened. Serve immediately on warm plates.

Duck breasts with port and cherry sauce

Duck and cherries are a classic pairing. Use fresh cherries in the summer or a jar of preserved cherries in kirsch at other times of the year.

SERVES 4

4 duck breasts, skin on, each 7–8 ounces

3 shallots, minced

1 cup port

2 cups cherries, pitted

2 tablespoons black cherry preserves

1¼ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

**½ teaspoon cornstarch or arrowroot mixed with few tablespoons water
(optional)**

Braised bok choy:

1 tablespoon butter

8 small heads of bok choy, each about 3 ounces, halved lengthwise

Season the duck breasts with salt and pepper. Place, skin-side down, in a dry frying pan. (You don't need to add any oil to the pan, because the duck skins are very fatty.) Set the pan over gentle heat and cook until most of the fat has been rendered, 8–10 minutes. Increase the heat slightly and fry until the skins are golden brown. Flip the breasts and cook on the other side until the meat feels slightly springy and the duck is cooked to medium rare, 3–4 minutes longer. Remove to a warm plate and let rest.

Pour off most of the fat from the pan (save for roasting potatoes). Add the shallots and stir over medium to low heat until soft, 4–5 minutes. Increase the heat and pour in the port to deglaze. Boil until the port has reduced right down and the pan is quite dry. Add the cherries, cherry preserves, and chicken stock. Bring back to a boil and boil until reduced by more than half and the sauce is syrupy. If you prefer the sauce thicker, add the cornstarch mixture and boil for a few minutes longer.

When you are about ready to serve, put 1 cup of water, the butter, and some seasoning into a sauté pan over high heat. As soon as the butter has melted, add the bok choy and braise until just wilted, about 2 minutes, turning the heads over halfway through the cooking. Drain on a large plate lined with paper towels.

Divide the bok choy and duck breasts among warm serving plates and spoon the port and cherry sauce over the duck. Serve immediately.





savory_pies and tarts

My mother, even as a working woman with four children, would bake a few savory pies or tarts every Friday night. We'd have them for supper and there'd still be leftovers for tea on Sunday. I adored my Mum's shepherd's pie, and it's still one of my favorite dishes to this day. I order it with a side of zucchini every time Tana and I go to The Ivy restaurant in London. They make it amazingly well—add a few dashes of Worcestershire sauce, and I'm in heaven!

To me, savory pies and tarts represent casual, relaxed cooking, and I wish more people still had the time or inclination to make them. As well as being enjoyed at suppers and picnics, pies and tarts can be elevated to fine dining. At our restaurant in Paris, we serve a cannon of lamb with a side dish neatly filled with a small serving of shepherd's pie. Everyone loves it, and it makes me proud to present our version of a British classic to our French guests.

Raised game pie
Shepherd's pie
Deep-dish chicken pie
Smoked salmon and horseradish cream tartlets
Fish pie with oysters and scallops
Spinach, feta, and pine nut tart
Crab and tarragon tart
Artichoke, asparagus, and ham quiche
Lemon, leek, and Dolcelatte tart

Wild mushroom tart with Parmesan and walnut pastry

Raised game pie

An old-fashioned British “raised” pie has a deep case made from a strong, hot-water pastry (sometimes called “short flake” in the U.S.). A pie like this is perfect sustenance for a day out hunting or mushroom-picking. I’ve made individual pies, but you could also make a large one to share (bake for an extra 10–15 minutes). You’ll need to plan ahead, because the finished pies have to set overnight.

MAKES 4 INDIVIDUAL PIES

Hot-water-crust pastry:

1²/₃ cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

1 extra-large egg

3½ tablespoons unsalted butter

3½ tablespoons lard

1/3 cup water

Pie filling:

8 ounces boneless loin of venison

5 ounces boneless partridge, pheasant, or guinea fowl breasts

2 ounces thick-sliced lean bacon, fat trimmed, chopped

7 ounces fresh bulk pork or venison sausage

1 tablespoon each chopped fresh parsley and sage

grated zest of 1 lemon

5 juniper berries, finely ground with a pinch of sea salt

2 egg yolks, lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash

For serving:

pickled onions (see Chapter 6)

piccalilli (see Chapter 6)

Begin by making the pastry. Sift the flour and salt into a mixing bowl and make a well in the middle. Crack the egg into the well and sprinkle some of the flour over the egg to cover it. Put the butter, lard, and water in a small pan and heat gently. Once the butter and lard have melted, increase the heat and bring to a boil.

Pour the boiling water and fat around the edge of the bowl and quickly stir everything together using a table knife. Knead the dough lightly until smooth. It will be quite soft at this stage. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until the pastry is firm, at least 1 hour.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Trim the game meat of any fat or sinew, then cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes. Mix with the bacon, sausage, herbs, lemon zest, and crushed juniper berries and season with salt and pepper. Divide the mixture into four equal portions and roll into balls.

Cut off one-third of the pastry for making the pie lids. Wrap it in plastic wrap and refrigerate. Roll out the remaining pastry on a lightly floured work surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Cut out four $5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diameter circles. Roll out the reserved pastry to the same thickness, and cut out four $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-diameter circles for the lids.

Place a stuffing ball in the middle of each pastry base and place a lid on top. Brush the border of the pastry base with the egg wash, then mold it up and around the filling to meet the lid. Curl the edge of the lid up to meet the top inside edge of the pie case and pinch together to seal. Repeat to make the other three pies. Crimp the edges to decorate. Refrigerate until the pastry feels firm.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Make a neat steam hole in the center of each pie lid with a small knife. Bake the pies for 15 minutes. Remove them from the oven and brush evenly with the remaining egg wash. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F and bake until the pastry is cooked and the center of the pie is hot, 20–30 minutes longer. To test, insert a metal skewer into the center of a pie for a few seconds, then feel it against your hand or lip: It should feel hot to the touch. Let the pies cool on a wire rack. Serve cold, with pickled onions and piccalilli.





Shepherd's pie

A traditional shepherd's pie is made with ground lamb, while the similar cottage pie is made with beef. Both freeze well (add 10–15 minutes to the cooking time if baking from frozen). A little bit of Branston Pickle enhances the flavor of the lamb in this recipe.

SERVES 4

1 pound lean ground lamb
2–3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, minced
1 large carrot, minced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 cup red wine
1½ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9)
1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
leaves from a handful of fresh thyme sprigs
leaves from a sprig of fresh rosemary, chopped
2½ tablespoons minced Branston Pickle

Topping:

1¼ pounds baking potatoes, cut into chunks
3½ tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons hot milk
3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan
2 extra-large egg yolks

Put a wide, cast-iron or other heavy-based pan over medium to high heat. Season the ground lamb with salt and pepper and fry in a thin layer of oil until evenly browned, about 10 minutes. (Fry the meat in two batches if necessary.) Transfer the lamb to a bowl using a slotted spoon.

Add a little more olive oil to the pan and stir in the onion, carrot, and garlic. Fry, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are golden brown, 4–5 minutes. Add the flour and tomato paste and stir for a couple of minutes longer. Pour in the red wine and scrape the bottom of the pan to dislodge the browned sediment. Let the wine boil until it has almost all evaporated and the pan is quite dry.

Pour in the chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Return the lamb to the pan and add the Worcestershire sauce and herbs. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and partially cover the pan. Simmer, stirring every once in a while, until the lamb is tender and the sauce has thickened, 30–40 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the potatoes in boiling salted water until tender when pierced with a small knife, 15–20 minutes. Drain well, then return to the hot pan over low heat to dry out briefly. Press the potatoes through a potato ricer into a large bowl. Mix in the butter, hot milk, and 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan. Season well to taste, then beat in the egg yolks and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Fold the minced Branston Pickle through the lamb mixture, then pour into an 8-cup baking dish. Spoon the mashed potato generously on top of the lamb filling, starting from the outside and working your way into the middle. Fluff up the mashed potato with a fork to make rough peaks. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan and grind a little black pepper over the top. Bake until the top is golden brown and the filling is bubbling up around the sides, 20–25 minutes. Serve with extra Branston Pickle, if you wish.





Deep-dish chicken pie

No other food makes me quite as enjoyably nostalgic as a good homemade chicken pie. When we were young, my mother used to make a wonderful chicken pie from scratch—pastry, chicken stock, and everything—with whatever little time she had. Here is my version of this ultimate comfort food.

SERVES 4

3¼ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9)
leaves from a sprig of fresh thyme
3 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, about 1¼ pounds in total
10 ounces boiling onions or shallots, peeled
7 ounces button mushrooms, cleaned
2 tablespoons butter
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup heavy cream
1 pound, or 1 recipe, basic short pastry (see Chapter 9)
2 extra-large egg yolks, lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash
coarse sea salt for sprinkling

Bring the stock to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Add the thyme leaves, then poach the chicken breasts until just firm and cooked through, 10–12 minutes. With a pair of kitchen tongs, transfer the poached chicken to a plate and let cool.

Tip the boiling onions into the stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue simmering until both the onions and mushrooms are tender, 4–5 minutes longer. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the onions and mushrooms to a large bowl.

Increase the heat under the stock and boil until it has reduced to 1¼ cups. Meanwhile, cut the chicken into bite-size pieces and add to the onions and mushrooms. When the stock has reduced, pour it into a pitcher.

Return the pan to the heat. Melt the butter in the pan and stir in the flour. Keep stirring over medium heat for 3–4 minutes. Gradually pour in the hot stock, stirring until smooth. Simmer until thickened, 5–10 minutes, then stir in the cream and bring back to a simmer. Season to taste with salt and pepper. The sauce should be thick and creamy. Pour it over the chicken and vegetables and mix well. Let cool completely.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Divide the pastry into two portions: two-thirds and one-third. Roll out the larger portion on a lightly floured surface to a circle large enough to line a pie dish or pan, or a casserole, that is 9–10 inches in diameter and 1½-2 inches deep. Line the dish and trim off the excess pastry. For a good-looking result, put a pie bird or pie funnel in the middle of the dish. Spread the filling evenly in the dish.

Roll out the remaining pastry to form a lid for the pie and cut a cross in the middle to fit around the pie bird. (If you're not using a pie bird, cut a small cross anyway, to serve as a steam vent.) Brush the pastry rim with the egg wash, then drape the pastry lid over the pie and press down around the rim to seal. Use a sharp knife to cut off any excess pastry around the rim, then crimp the edges. If you wish, decorate the pie with pastry leaves made with the trimmings. Brush the pie top and trimmings with the egg wash and sprinkle the top with coarse sea salt. Bake until the pastry is golden brown and the sauce is bubbling from the steam hole, about 35 minutes.

Smoked salmon and horseradish cream tartlets

These tarts make a perfect first course for a dinner party. To get ahead, bake the pastry shells 2–3 days in advance and store in an airtight container to keep them crisp. (I rarely make my own puff pastry, but always buy a good brand made with butter.) The smoked salmon filling can also be prepared beforehand, but bear in mind that the flavor of the raw shallots will become stronger with time. Serve with dressed salad leaves on the side.

MAKES 4

9 ounces puff pastry, thawed if frozen

7 ounces hot-smoked salmon

1 large shallot, minced

½ celery rib, minced

2 tablespoons cream-style horseradish

6 tablespoons crème fraîche

pinch of cayenne pepper

squeeze of lemon juice

small handful of fresh dillweed, leaves chopped, plus a few fronds for garnish

4 large slices of smoked salmon for garnish

Begin by making the tartlet shells. Cut the pastry into four portions, then roll out each one on a lightly floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Prick all over with a fork. Use them to line four 4-inch tartlet pans with removable bottoms. Let the pastry extend a little above the rim of the pan. Use a pair of kitchen scissors to trim away bigger pieces of excess pastry because they are vulnerable to breaking off. Carefully stack the pastry-lined

pans, one on top of the other, pushing the pans down to keep the shape of the pastry. Let rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Put the stacked pastry shells on a baking sheet. Line the top pastry shell with foil and pie weights. Bake until the pastry is set and golden, 25–30 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and carefully separate the tartlet pans. Place them side by side on the baking sheet and return to the oven to bake until golden brown and cooked through, 5–10 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and let cool in the pans. When cool, use a sharp knife to trim off the excess pastry level with the rims.

Put the hot-smoked salmon, shallot, and celery in a food processor and blend until smooth. Add the horseradish and crème fraîche and pulse for a few more seconds until they become incorporated into the mixture. Season to taste with salt, pepper, cayenne, and lemon juice. Fold in the chopped dill. Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to let the mixture set a little and for the flavors to come together.

Remove the tartlet shells from the pans. Spread the filling in the shells. Drape the smoked salmon slices attractively over the filling and garnish the tarts with a few dill fronds.



Fish pie with oysters and scallops

The scallops lend sweetness to the pie, while fresh oysters help to enrich and season the filling with their natural salt. Buttered spinach is a good side dish for this.

SERVES 4–6

1¾ pounds firm, skinless fish fillets, such as salmon and/or monkfish
6 fresh oysters, shucked
6 sea scallops, cut in half
handful of fresh basil leaves

Sauce:

1½ tablespoons butter
2 shallots, minced
1/3 cup dry white wine
1/3 cup Noilly Prat
2/3 cup fish stock (see Chapter 9)
2/3 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard (optional)
squeeze of lemon juice

Topping:

1¾ pounds baking potatoes, cut into large chunks
5 tablespoons butter, cut into cubes
¼ cup hot milk
2 extra-large egg yolks
Parmesan for grating

First, prepare the sauce for the filling. Heat the butter in a pan and sweat the shallots until soft. Add the white wine and Noilly Prat and reduce by half. Add the stock and bubble away again until reduced by half. Pour in the cream and boil until reduced to a thick sauce consistency. Strain through a sieve and discard the shallot. Stir in the mustard, if using, and check for seasoning, adding a little lemon juice to taste. Let cool completely.

Next, make the topping. Put the potatoes into a pan of salted water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender when pierced with a knife, 15–20 minutes. Drain well, then push them through a potato ricer. Mix in the butter and hot milk until melted and well incorporated. Season to taste and let cool slightly. Beat the egg yolks lightly, then mix into the cooled potato. Set aside while you prepare the fish.

Heat the oven to 350°F. Check the fish fillets for any small bones, removing any with tweezers, then cut into 1¼-inch chunks. Season lightly, then gently fold the fish, oysters, and scallops into the sauce with the basil leaves. Transfer to an 8-cup baking dish. Spread the potato over the filling and run a fork over it for a rustic finish. Grate Parmesan evenly over the top. Bake until the pie is bubbling and golden brown on top, 25–35 minutes.

Spinach, feta, and pine nut tart

This tart is based on the Greek *spanakopita*. As I've never been a huge fan of phyllo pastry, my version uses a basic short pastry crust instead.

SERVES 4

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, basic short pastry (see Chapter 9)

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 sweet onions, minced

1 pound spinach leaves, washed and drained

nutmeg for grating

8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

1 extra-large egg

1 extra-large egg yolk

scant 1 cup heavy cream

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup toasted pine nuts

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness, then use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling: Heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the onions with a little salt and pepper until soft but not browned, 6–8 minutes. Wilt the spinach leaves in a large pan in several batches, stirring. As each batch is wilted, transfer to a colander. Press down on the spinach with the back of

a ladle to squeeze out the excess water. Let the spinach cool slightly, then roughly chop.

Put the onion and spinach in a large bowl and grate over a little nutmeg. Add the feta, egg, egg yolk, cream, and a generous grinding of black pepper. Add a pinch of salt to taste, bearing in mind that the feta is already salty. Finally, fold in the pine nuts and 3 tablespoons of the Parmesan. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

Heat the oven to 400°F. Line the tart shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, 5 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. Use a sharp knife to trim off the overhanging pastry, then set aside to cool.

Spread the filling evenly in the pastry shell, then sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan. Bake until the top is golden brown and the filling has set, 35–40 minutes. Let cool slightly before unmolding, slicing, and serving.

Crab and tarragon tart

This tart is light, but—at the same time—indulgent. I advise against using canned crabmeat because the excess brine in it will dilute the custard and make the pastry soggy. Fresh crabmeat is greatly superior in taste, too.

SERVES 6 AS A FIRST COURSE OR 4 AS A LIGHT LUNCH

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, basic short pastry (see Chapter 9)

1 pound crabmeat

scant 1 cup crème fraîche

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream

1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard

2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

grated zest and juice of 1 small lemon

small bunch of fresh tarragon, leaves minced

2 extra-large eggs

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness, then use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line the pastry shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Take the pastry shell out of the oven and let cool slightly. Using a sharp knife, trim off the excess pastry level with the rim.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F. Pick over the crabmeat and discard any pieces of shell or cartilage. In a large mixing bowl, lightly beat together the crème fraîche, sour cream, mustard, Parmesan, and lemon zest and juice. Stir in the crabmeat and tarragon, then season well with salt and pepper to taste. Lightly beat the eggs and stir into the mixture. Pour into the pastry shell.

Bake the tart until the filling is puffed and golden on top but still slightly wobbly in the center, 35–40 minutes. Remove the tart from the oven and let it cool a little before slicing and serving.





Artichoke, asparagus, and ham quiche

This is a wonderful quiche to make when local asparagus is in season or when you have leftover glazed ham (see Chapter 4).

SERVES 4–6

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, basic short pastry (see Chapter 9)

10 ounces asparagus

3 extra-large eggs

1 cup crème fraîche

scant 1 cup grated Gruyère

1 cup cooked ham cut into cubes

8–10 ounces bottled artichoke hearts in olive oil, drained and halved or quartered

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness, then use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, trim the ends of the asparagus and peel the tough stalks. Cut the spears into finger lengths, then blanch in boiling salted water until just tender and bright green, about 3 minutes. Drain and refresh in a bowl of ice water, then drain again.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line the pastry shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil

and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Take the pastry shell out of the oven and cool slightly. Using a sharp knife, trim off the excess pastry level with the rim of the pan.

For the filling, beat together the eggs and crème fraîche with a pinch each of salt and pepper. Stir in three-quarters of the Gruyère. Evenly scatter the cooked ham, artichoke hearts, and asparagus over the bottom of the pastry shell. Spoon in the filling to come just below the rim (you may not need all the filling). Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake until the filling is set and golden on top, 30–35 minutes. Let cool slightly, then unmold and slice. Eat warm or at room temperature.

Lemon, leek and dolcelatte tart

This is an easy, free-form tart. As it is filled and then baked, the bottom of the pastry shell will not be as crisp as one that has been prebaked “blind.” If you are making the pastry yourself, add the finely grated zest of a small lemon for extra zing.

SERVES 4

4 large leeks, about 2¼ pounds in total, washed

2 tablespoons butter

leaves from a few sprigs of fresh thyme

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, basic short pastry (see Chapter 9)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup crème fraîche

3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

grated zest of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon lemon juice

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup crumbled Dolcelatte

1 extra-large egg, lightly beaten

1 large egg yolk, lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash

Remove the outer leaves from the leeks and trim off the ends, then slice finely. Melt the butter in a large pan over medium heat. As it begins to foam, add the leeks, thyme, and some salt and pepper. Cover the pan and cook until the leeks are soft but not colored, 8–10 minutes. Lift the lid and give the leeks a stir every once in a while. Remove the lid and stir over high heat to evaporate any excess moisture in the leeks. Transfer to a mixing bowl and let cool.

Preheat the oven to 400°F with a large baking sheet inside. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Cut out a 10-inch-diameter circle. Drape the pastry over the rolling pin and transfer to another baking sheet.

Mix the crème fraîche, Parmesan, grated lemon zest and juice, and three-quarters of the Dolcelatte with the leeks. Season to taste, then stir in the egg.

Spread the leek and cheese filling evenly over the pastry, leaving a 1-inch border. Scatter the remaining Dolcelatte over the filling. Fold the pastry border in over the filling and carefully crimp the edges. Brush the crimped edges with the egg wash.

Put the tart on its baking sheet onto the hot sheet in the oven. Bake for 20 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 350°F and continue baking until the pastry is golden brown, 15–20 minutes longer. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing and serving.



Wild mushroom tart with Parmesan and walnut pastry

The flavors in this tart are earthy and rich. When wild mushrooms are in season, I use a combination of cèpes (porcini), chanterelles, trompettes de la mort, and any others that are available. At other times of year, a mixture of sliced portobellos and cremini mushrooms does the job.

SERVES 4–6

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, walnut and Parmesan pastry (see Chapter 9)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 shallots, minced

leaves from a few sprigs of fresh thyme

12 ounces mixed fresh wild mushrooms, large ones sliced

1 cup crème fraîche

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream

1 extra-large egg

1 extra-large egg yolk

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine sea salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness, then use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line the pastry shell with foil and fill it with pie weights. Bake until the pastry is set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes.

Remove the foil and weights and return to the oven to bake until the pastry is golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. Use a sharp knife to trim off the overhanging pastry, then set the pastry shell aside to cool.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling: Melt the butter in a frying pan and add the shallots. Sauté the shallots until they begin to soften, 3–4 minutes. Add the thyme leaves, mushrooms, and some salt and pepper. Fry the mushrooms over high heat until any moisture they release has evaporated, 4–5 minutes. Transfer the mushroom mixture to a bowl and let cool.

For the custard, whisk together the crème fraîche, heavy cream, egg, egg yolk, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl.

Once cooled, spread the mushrooms evenly in the tart shell and pour in the custard. Bake the tart until the custard is golden and slightly puffed, 35–45 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool for a few minutes before unmolding. Slice and serve warm or at room temperature.



vegetables and salads

I've included a selection of vegetable dishes and salads using seasonal ingredients in this chapter. Even as a young lad, I understood the importance and joy of eating locally grown fruits and vegetables. My dad moved us around a lot, and in one place we lived I used to spend summer vacations cutting asparagus or picking potatoes for spending money. Lunch was usually a simple soup made with vegetable trimmings, but it tasted of the garden because the ingredients were super-fresh. When the season gets into full swing, taste a home-grown asparagus spear alongside an imported one, and you'll know what I mean.

Walnut, celery, endive, and apple salad
Roasted winter vegetables
Glazed Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and pancetta
Roasted tomatoes with marjoram
Spicy cauliflower stir-fry
Braised celery hearts with bacon
Caramelized fennel and red onions
Artichokes braised with onions and bacon
Endive, goat cheese, and strawberry salad with pine nuts
New potato, pea, and fava bean salad with mustard dressing
Grilled eggplant with balsamic, feta, and mint
Mixed mushroom salad
Braised red cabbage with apple
Pickled onions
Piccalilli



Walnut, celery, endive, and apple salad

This is a simple, modern take on the classic Waldorf salad. To make it a main course, you can add slices of cold smoked chicken or leftover roast chicken or turkey.

SERVES 4

2 heads of Belgian endive

4 celery ribs

2 apples

squeeze of lemon juice

handful of toasted walnut halves, chopped

Dressing:

3 tablespoons mayonnaise (see Chapter 9)

2 tablespoons plain yogurt

½ teaspoon celery salt

1 tablespoon lemon juice

First, prepare the dressing by combining all the ingredients in a bowl and seasoning with black pepper to taste.

Trim off the bases of the endive heads and separate the leaves. Scatter a few leaves over each serving plate. Trim and roughly chop the celery, including any leaves, then place in a bowl. Core and thinly slice the apples, add to the celery, and toss with a little lemon juice to prevent them from discoloring. Add half the walnuts and toss well. Divide among the serving plates and

scatter the remaining walnuts over the top. Either drizzle the dressing over the salad or serve in individual bowls on the side.

Roasted winter vegetables

I'm a big fan of root vegetables, particularly the less attractive ones that tend to be overlooked in the vegetable display, such as celery root, rutabaga, and kohlrabi. Each vegetable has a distinctive flavor that is intensified when roasted. An obvious pairing with any roast, this dish can also be converted into a vegetarian main course with the addition of some robust salad leaves, a creamy yogurt dressing, and a sprinkling of soft goat cheese.

SERVES 4–6

½ large rutabaga

½ large turnip

½ large celery root

1 kohlrabi (optional)

2 large carrots

2 large parsnips

olive oil for drizzling

few sprigs of fresh thyme and rosemary, leaves stripped

clear honey for drizzling (optional)

Heat the oven to 400°F with one large or two medium roasting pans inside. Peel the rutabaga, turnip, celery root, and kohlrabi, if using, then cut them into ¾-inch-thick chunks. Peel the carrots and parsnips and cut lengthwise into halves or quarters, similar to the thickness of the other root vegetables.

Put all the vegetables in a large bowl and drizzle a little olive oil over them. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and the herbs. Toss well to coat. Remove the roasting pan(s) from the oven and spread the vegetables in the pan(s) in an

even layer. Roast until the vegetables are golden brown and tender, 25–30 minutes, turning them over halfway through the cooking.

If you wish, toss the vegetables with a light drizzle of honey to glaze. Tip onto a warm serving platter and serve.

Glazed Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and pancetta

When cooked properly, these nutritious little cabbages are delicious, especially when matched with pancetta and chestnuts. For extra flavor, sprinkle on some freshly grated Parmesan and toasted sliced almonds.

SERVES 4

1 pound Brussels sprouts

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon butter

4 slices of pancetta, chopped

7 ounces vacuum-packed roasted, peeled chestnuts, roughly chopped

small pinch of red-pepper flakes

leaves stripped from a sprig of fresh thyme

Trim off a little of the base from each Brussels sprout. Cook the sprouts in a pan of boiling salted water until they are crisp-tender, 8–10 minutes. Drain and refresh in a bowl of ice water until cooled, then drain again. Cut the sprouts in half through the core so that they will take in more flavor from the other ingredients.

Just before you are ready to serve, heat the oil and butter in a pan and fry the pancetta until it is golden brown and crisp. Add the chestnuts, pepper flakes, and thyme leaves and stir over medium to high heat to warm the chestnuts. Add the blanched sprouts with a splash of water. Stir-fry until the sprouts are warmed through and excess liquid has evaporated, 1–2 minutes. Season generously with black pepper, then transfer to a warm platter and serve.

Roasted tomatoes with marjoram

Roasting tomatoes intensifies their flavor, and they make an appetizing addition to salads and pasta dishes, or accompaniment for fish, poultry, or meat.

SERVES 4

1¾ pounds vine-ripened plum or Roma tomatoes

2 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced

leaves from a handful of fresh marjoram

3–4 tablespoons olive oil

Heat the oven to 300°F. Halve the tomatoes lengthwise and place cut-side up in a shallow baking dish, making sure they are well spaced. Place a slice of garlic on each tomato half, then scatter the marjoram leaves over them. Drizzle on a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Bake for 30 minutes, basting the tomatoes with the pan juices halfway through the cooking. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Spicy cauliflower stir-fry

Fragrant and warm Indian spices can really improve the flavor of the relatively bland cauliflower, which explains why many recipes for cauliflower soup include a dash of curry powder. This dish makes a wonderful accompaniment in an Indian meal. I also like to serve it with fried fish.

SERVES 4

1 medium head of cauliflower, about 1¼ pounds
½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds
½ teaspoon coriander seeds
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
⅓ teaspoon ground turmeric
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, finely sliced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 large, fresh, red chili pepper, deseeded and minced
½ cup vegetable or chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

Cut the cauliflower into small florets and set aside. Lightly toast the fenugreek, coriander, and cumin seeds in a dry pan until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Tip into a mortar and add the ground turmeric and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Grind to a fine powder.

Heat the oil in a large pan or a wok. Add the onions and a little salt and pepper. Stir over low heat until the onions are soft but not browned, about 6

minutes. Add the garlic, chili, and ground spices and stir-fry for 1 minute longer.

Add the cauliflower florets and pour in the stock. Cook, stirring frequently, until the cauliflower is just tender and most of the stock has been absorbed or evaporated, 6–8 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning and serve warm.

Braised celery hearts with bacon

Tender and flavorful braised celery hearts are especially good with pork and chicken. For a simple weeknight supper, serve with poached chicken breasts and steamed rice or creamy polenta.

SERVES 4–6

4–6 celery hearts or whole bunches of celery
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 thick slices of lean bacon, chopped into cubes
2 large garlic cloves, finely sliced
¼ teaspoon dried oregano
1¼ cups chicken or vegetable stock (see Chapter 9)
2 tablespoons tomato paste

If using whole bunches of celery, cut 6–8 inches off the top half and reserve to use in soups or salads. Remove the tough outer ribs until you reach the tender, light yellowish-green hearts. Quarter the hearts lengthwise.

Heat the oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the bacon and fry until golden around the edges, 4–5 minutes. Add the garlic and fry for 1 minute longer. Add the oregano, stock, and tomato paste to the pan and stir well to mix.

Add the celery hearts. Partially cover and gently simmer until tender when pierced with a skewer, 20–30 minutes. Transfer the celery and any sauce in the pan to a platter and serve warm.



Caramelized fennel and red onions

Fennel and onions have similar qualities: Both become tender, sweet, and mellow when cooked, and caramelizing them helps to bring out their natural sugars. This easy side dish is ideal with roast pork or chicken.

SERVES 4

2 large fennel bulbs

4 large red (or white) onions

½ teaspoon fennel seeds

2 tablespoons olive oil

½ cup dry white wine

**½ cup chicken or vegetable
stock (see Chapter 9)**

2 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces

Trim off the bases from the fennel bulbs, then cut them lengthwise into thick wedges. Cut the peeled onions into quarters. Set aside.

Tip the fennel seeds into a mortar with a seasoning of salt and pepper. Grind to a powder. Sprinkle this over the onions and fennel.

Heat a wide sauté pan with the olive oil until hot. In batches, fry the onions and fennel over high heat until golden brown, 2–3 minutes on each side. Return all the browned onion and fennel to the pan, then pour in the wine and stock and dot the butter over the vegetables. Cover with a dampened piece of crumpled parchment paper and then with a lid. Bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer until nearly all of the wine has been absorbed, 30–40 minutes. Transfer to a warm platter and serve.



Artichokes braised with onions and bacon

This dish is based on *artichauts à la barigoule*, a classic provençale dish in which artichokes are gently poached in fragrant stock, which is then boiled down to make a sauce. It's perfect with any white or oily fish.

SERVES 4

1 lemon, halved

8 medium-sized globe artichokes

2–3 tablespoons olive oil

1 thick slice of lean bacon, chopped into cubes

1 small onion, chopped

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

few sprigs of fresh thyme

few sprigs of fresh basil, stems and leaves separated

½ teaspoon coriander seeds

⅓ cup dry white wine

1¾ cups chicken stock (see Chapter 9)

Fill a large bowl with water and squeeze the lemon halves into it. Working with one artichoke at a time, cut across in half. Discard the top and pull off the outer green leaves until you reach the tender yellow leaves. If the artichoke is old, scrape out the hairy choke with a melon baller or spoon. Trim and peel the base and stem, then quarter the heart. Add to the bowl of lemon water. Repeat with the remaining artichokes.

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a medium pan. Drain the artichokes and pat dry with a clean dish towel. In batches, fry the artichokes, cut-side

down, until the edges are golden brown. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Add the bacon cubes to the pan and sauté until slightly browned, 4–5 minutes. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, 4–6 minutes. Add the garlic, thyme, basil stems, and coriander seeds, then deglaze the pan with the wine. Boil until reduced by two-thirds, then pour in the chicken stock. Bring back to a boil and simmer until reduced by half.

Return the artichokes to the pan. Simmer until they are tender, 8–10 minutes, turning them over halfway through the cooking time. Remove the artichokes and most of the onions and bacon to a plate, then boil the sauce until reduced to a syrupy glaze. Return the artichokes, onions, and bacon to the pan and toss to coat with the sauce.

Adjust the seasoning and transfer the vegetables to a warm bowl. Tear the basil leaves and scatter them over the artichokes.





Endive, goat cheese, and strawberry salad with pine nuts

This fresh and colorful salad says summer to me. I've also made it with raspberries, tumbling a handful over each plate and thickening the dressing with a few crushed berries.

SERVES 4–5

2 heads of Belgian endive

4 ounces small arugula leaves

5 ounces strawberries, hulled and quartered (1–2 cups)

1/3 cup toasted pine nuts

7 ounces soft goat cheese

Dressing:

1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar

3 tablespoons raspberry vinegar

7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

pinch of sugar

Trim off the base of the chicory heads and pull apart the leaves. Place in a salad bowl with the arugula leaves and toss lightly. Scatter the strawberries and pine nuts over the leaves, then crumble the goat cheese on top.

Just before serving, whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing with seasoning to taste (or put them into a tightly covered jar and shake well). Drizzle the dressing over the salad (you may not need all of the dressing) and toss.





New potato, pea, and fava bean salad with mustard dressing

Small boiling potatoes with a waxy flesh are best for this salad. If you need to save time, cook the fava beans a little longer and leave them in their skins.

SERVES 4–6

1¾ pounds evenly sized boiling potatoes, washed

¾ cup green peas, thawed if frozen

1 cup shelled fava beans

few sprigs of fresh dillweed for garnish

Mustard dressing:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar

½ tablespoon Dijon mustard

½ tablespoon wholegrain mustard

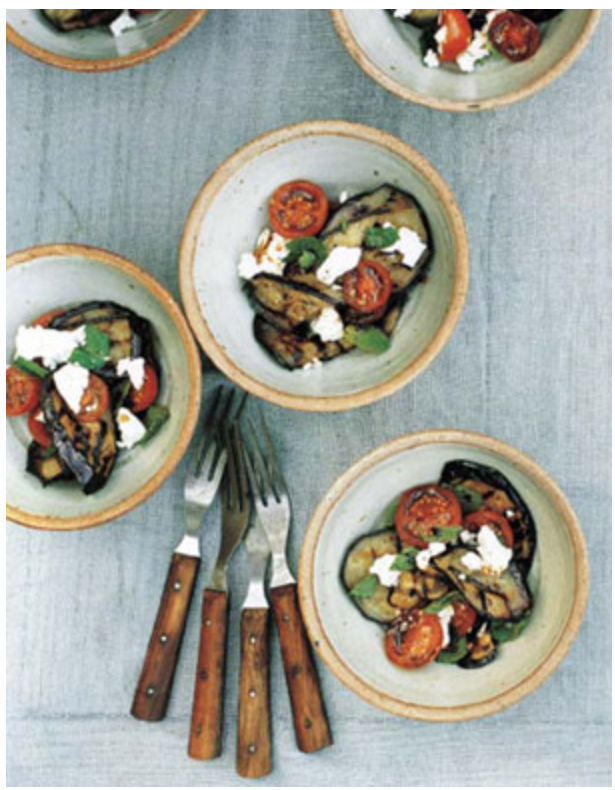
handful of fresh tarragon and dillweed, chopped

pinch of sugar (optional)

Cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling salted water until tender when pierced with a skewer, 10–15 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing (or put them into a tightly covered jar and shake well).

Bring another pot of salted water to a boil. Blanch the peas and fava beans separately until tender, about 3 minutes each. Drain, refresh in a bowl of ice water, and drain again. Squeeze the fava beans out of their pale skins.

When cooked, drain the potatoes in a colander and let cool slightly. If you wish, peel off the skins using a small knife (wear rubber gloves to protect your hands). Put the potatoes into a large bowl and, while still warm, toss with the dressing to coat. Stir in the peas and fava beans. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Garnish with a few dill sprigs and serve.





Grilled eggplant with balsamic, feta, and mint

Although you can pan-grill the eggplant on a ridged cast-iron grill pan, I like to grill the slices over hot coals, where they take on a lovely smoky quality. However, if you prefer to pan-grill, add a little sweet paprika to the olive oil and brush this over the eggplant slices to give them a smoky flavor.

SERVES 4–5

2 medium eggplants

¼ cup olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

1 fat garlic clove, minced

1 heaped cup cherry tomatoes, halved

4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

good-quality aged balsamic vinegar for drizzling

small handful of fresh mint, leaves chopped

Prepare the barbecue. Trim and thinly slice the eggplants. Mix the olive oil with the minced garlic and some seasoning in a small bowl. Brush the oil on both sides of the eggplant slices, then grill them until tender, about 2 minutes on each side.

Overlap the grilled eggplant slices on a platter and scatter the cherry tomatoes and feta cheese over them. Drizzle on a little balsamic vinegar and finish off with a generous grinding of black pepper and a sprinkling of chopped mint.

Mixed mushroom salad

The earthy flavor of wild mushrooms is unbeatable. When they are not in season, use a mixture of shiitake, oyster, portabello, and/or cremini mushrooms.

SERVES 4

2 shallots, thinly sliced

1½ tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

2 tablespoons butter

1¼ pounds mixed mushrooms (see above), thinly sliced

squeeze of lemon juice

1–2 tablespoons walnut oil

large handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves roughly chopped

4 ounces small arugula or mixed salad leaves

Place a wide frying pan over medium heat. Sauté the shallots in the olive oil until soft, 4–6 minutes. Add the butter to melt. As it begins to foam, add the mushrooms and some salt and pepper. Toss over high heat until the mushrooms are lightly browned and any liquid released has evaporated, 2–3 minutes.

Tip the sautéed mushrooms and shallots into a bowl. Squeeze a little lemon juice over them and drizzle on the walnut oil. Add the chopped parsley and season to taste.

Just before serving, toss the arugula or salad leaves with a little lemon juice and olive oil, then place neat piles on each serving plate. Divide the

mushrooms among the plates and serve.

Braised red cabbage with apple

This gorgeous braised cabbage, which features again and again on our restaurant menus, is a fantastic accompaniment to game or other rich red meat. It keeps well in the refrigerator for about a week.

SERVES 4

1 small head of red cabbage, about 1¼ pounds

1 large baking or other tart apple

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup butter

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup cider vinegar or clear malt vinegar

2 cinnamon sticks

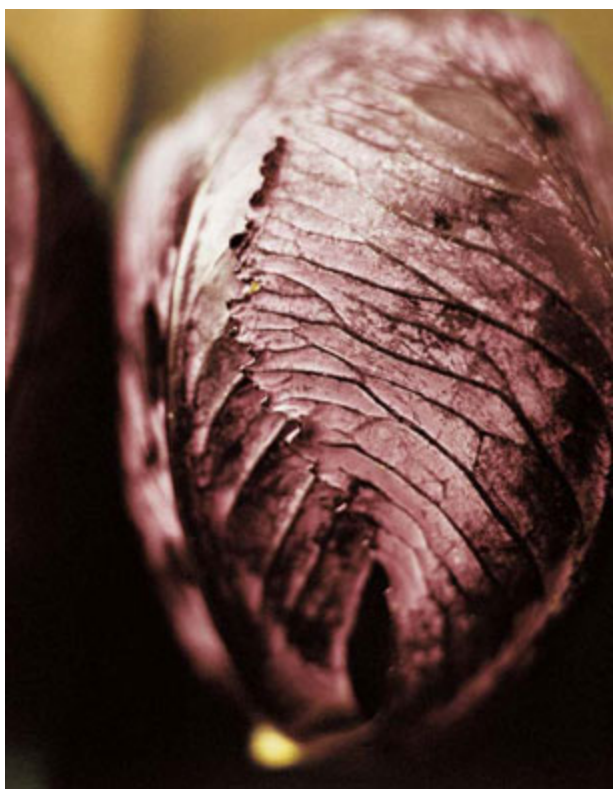
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Quarter, core, and finely shred the cabbage. Peel, core, and thickly slice the apple. Set aside.

Put the butter, sugar, and vinegar in a stovetop-to-oven casserole and stir over medium heat until the sugar has dissolved. Add the cinnamon, cloves, and a seasoning of salt and pepper. Tip in the cabbage and apple and toss well to coat. Put a wet, crumpled piece of parchment paper on top and transfer the pan to the oven.

Braise until tender, about 1½ hours. Every 30 minutes during the cooking, carefully lift the parchment paper and give the mixture a stir, dampening the paper again each time to prevent it from burning.

Remove the paper and continue braising, stirring after 10 minutes, until the cabbage is tender and the liquid in the pan has reduced to a syrupy glaze, 15–20 minutes longer.





Pickled onions

There's nothing quite like homemade pickled onions! Be sure to use canning jars with two-piece screwband lids, and for longer storage, process in a simmering hot-water bath.

MAKES 1 POUND

1½ cups coarse pickling salt

1 pound pearl or boiling onions

3 cups malt vinegar

1 cup cider vinegar

2 teaspoons each of coriander seeds, mustard seeds, whole allspice, black peppercorns, and mace

2 bay leaves

1-ounce piece of fresh ginger, bruised

1 tablespoon sugar

First, make a brine. Put the salt and 2 cups water in a saucepan and stir over low heat until fully dissolved. Pour into a large bowl and let cool completely.

Meanwhile, peel the onions. (It will be easier to remove the skins if you quickly blanch the onions in boiling water for 30 seconds, then refresh in cold water and drain well.) Add the peeled onions to the brine. Place a plate on top to keep them submerged in the liquid. Let soak in a cool part of the kitchen, or the refrigerator, for 24 hours.

Put the vinegars, dried spices, bay leaves, and ginger into a nonreactive pot (such as stainless steel or enameled) with the sugar. Boil for 20–25 minutes, then strain the vinegar through a fine sieve and discard the flavorings. Let cool completely.

Rinse the onions and drain well. Divide them among sterilized jars, pour in the pickling liquid to cover, and seal the jars tightly. Leave the onions to pickle in a cool, dark place for at least 2 weeks before eating. Refrigerate after opening.

Piccalilli

This mustardy pickled vegetable relish is the ultimate accompaniment to a raised game pie (see Chapter 5 for recipe) or cold meat terrine. If you can't find fresh pearl onions, you can use small boiling onions or shallots.

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

3 tablespoons pickling salt

1 pound pearl onions, peeled

1 small head of cauliflower, about 1 pound, cut into small florets

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups cider vinegar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

2 tablespoons English mustard powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons ground ginger

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons ground turmeric

Dissolve the salt in 4 cups of warm water in a large bowl. Add the onions and cauliflower and place a plate on top to keep the vegetables submerged in the brine. Let soak in a cool part of the kitchen, or in the refrigerator, overnight. Next day, drain the vegetables and rinse under cold running water. Drain well.

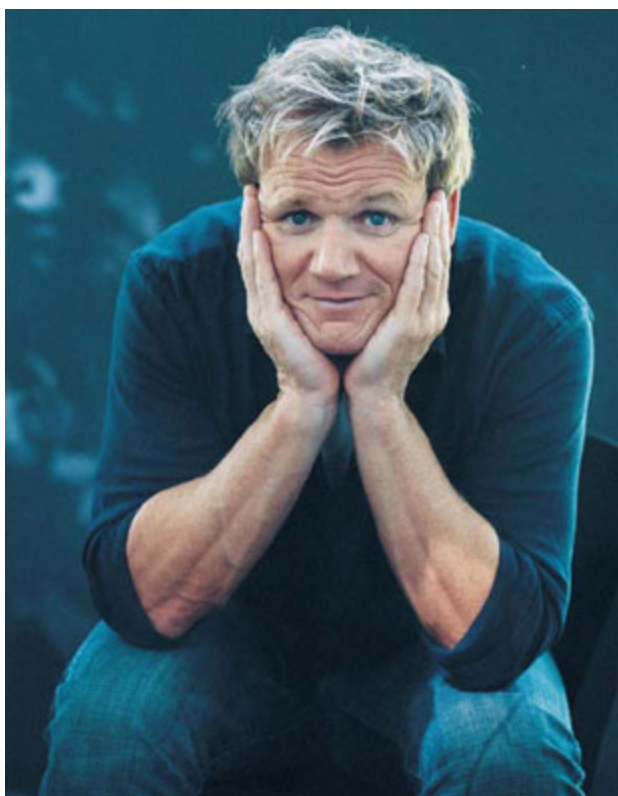
Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar in a nonreactive pot over low heat, then boil until reduced by half, 15–20 minutes. Add $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups water, then bring back to a boil. Mix the cornstarch and mustard powder together, then stir in

several tablespoons of the reduced vinegar to make a smooth paste. Whisk this back into the rest of the vinegar.

Heat the oil in a large, nonreactive saucepan and gently fry the ginger and turmeric for 1–2 minutes. Lower the heat, then gradually add the reduced vinegar mixture, stirring as you pour. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook until it starts to thicken and coats the back of your spoon, 2–3 minutes.

Add the vegetables to the pan, bring to a boil, and simmer until the cauliflower has softened and the onions are crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Add a little salt and pepper to taste. Spoon into sterilized jars and seal. Store in a dark, cool place for 1 month before eating. The flavor improves the longer you keep the piccalilli (for longer storage, process the jars of piccalilli in a simmering hot-water bath). Refrigerate after opening.







desserts and ices

Nostalgia is a powerful emotion when it comes to food. Or perhaps I should say that food is a powerful evoker of nostalgia. My work takes me around the world to countries with fascinating and delicious cuisines, but as soon as I reach home, I develop a craving for old-fashioned British desserts.

That traditional desserts are enjoying a revival is clear from the success of my pub menus. Apple pies, rice puddings, and lemon meringue pies always sell out. In many cases, we've updated classic recipes, adding a little stem ginger to fruit crumbles and using luscious and creamy lemon tarts as the base for lemon meringue pies. Some recipes, however, I prefer unmodified: my mother's Bakewell tart, for example.

Pear and frangipane tart
Autumn fruit salad with thyme and ginger
Strawberry and champagne granita
Caramelized apple pie
Summer berry trifle
Peach, raspberry, and ginger crumble
Baked gooseberries with honey and almonds
Fig ice cream
Cinnamon rice pudding with apricot compote
Custard tart
Lemon meringue tart
Bakewell tart
Poached rhubarb with ginger ice cream

Mixed berry tartlets with vanilla and peach cream
Blackberry sorbet with shortbread fingers





Pear and frangipane tart

This beautiful and delicious tart is—by a piece of good fortune—quick and easy to make. What could be better? It can be served warm or at room temperature, and is ideal for a lavish picnic.

SERVES 4–6

Tart:

10 ounces puff pastry (see introductory note on Chapter 5), thawed if frozen
1 egg yolk, beaten with 2 teaspoons water, for egg wash
2 large, or 3 medium, ripe pears

Sugar syrup:

¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup water
1 cinnamon stick
2 star anise
juice of 1 lemon

Frangipane:

6 tablespoons butter, softened to room temperature
⅔ cup confectioners' sugar, plus extra for dusting
1 large egg, lightly beaten
¾ cup ground almonds
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons Amaretto

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness and cut out a neat 8-inch-diameter circle. Transfer to a baking sheet, then lightly score a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch border all around. Brush the border with the egg wash to glaze, then let the pastry rest in the refrigerator while you prepare the filling.

Place all the ingredients for the sugar syrup in a small saucepan and stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and simmer until thickened slightly, about 10 minutes. Let cool.

Meanwhile, beat together the butter and sugar for the frangipane. Slowly add the egg, mixing until fully incorporated. Add the almonds and flour and fold through. Finally, mix in the Amaretto. Let the mixture stand for 5 minutes.

Peel the pears, then cut each in half lengthwise. Remove the cores with a small spoon or a melon baller and discard. Cut each pear lengthwise into thin slices and place in a large bowl. Pour the cooled sugar syrup over the pears. Let macerate for a few minutes while you preheat the oven to 375°F. (It is best not to use a convection oven for this recipe.)

Spread a layer of frangipane evenly over the pastry round, leaving the glazed border clear. Drain the pears and dab dry with paper towels, then arrange on top in a concentric circle. Sift a little confectioners' sugar over the pears. Bake until the pears are tender and the filling is golden brown and set, 35–45 minutes. Remove the tart from the oven and let cool slightly. If you like, brush the pears with the sugar syrup left in the bowl.

Autumn fruit salad with thyme and ginger

You could also serve this as a light and healthy dessert or as part of a buffet brunch. Put out a large bowl of yogurt to serve alongside, if you wish.

SERVES 4

3–4 ripe plums

1 red apple

1 green apple

2 ripe pears

Thyme and ginger syrup:

1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

1 star anise

½ teaspoon coriander seeds

few sprigs of fresh thyme

1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced

½ cup sugar

½ cup water

Begin by making the thyme and ginger syrup: Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and put in a pan with the bean and the remaining syrup ingredients. Stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat to a simmer and cook until the syrup has thickened slightly, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the plums in half and remove the pits. Quarter the apples and pears and remove the cores. Place all the fruit in a large bowl. While

the syrup is still piping hot, pour it over the fruit and toss well to coat. Let cool, then macerate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.





Strawberry and champagne granita

A sophisticated and refreshing dessert for hot days. To make it child-friendly, use cranberry juice in place of champagne and top with a little cold milk to make a milky strawberry slush. Stick a wide straw into each glass to complete. The granita will also serve well as a refreshing palate-cleanser between courses.

SERVES 4–6

2 pounds ripe strawberries, plus a handful for garnish

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar

3 tablespoons water

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup champagne, plus optional extra for serving

2 tablespoons lemon juice

Hull and roughly chop the strawberries, then put them into a large heatproof bowl. Stir in the sugar and water. Set the bowl over a pan of gently simmering water and stir frequently to help dissolve the sugar. Carefully cover the bowl with a plate (or the lid of a saucepan) and gently steam until the strawberries are very soft and have released their juices, 30–40 minutes.

Remove the bowl from the heat and strain the strawberry juice through a fine sieve into a clean bowl. Let cool, then mix in the champagne and lemon juice. Pour the mixture into a wide, shallow container and freeze until partially frozen, 1–2 hours.

Stir the ice crystals around the sides of the container into the liquid center. Return to the freezer and freeze for 1–2 hours longer, then give the mixture another stir as before.

When ready to serve, hull a few strawberries and cut into quarters. Drop them into individual serving glasses. Scrape the granita with a strong spoon and pile into the glasses over the strawberries. If you wish, pour in a splash of champagne and serve immediately.



Caramelized apple pie

I love the flavor of caramelized apples in a *tarte Tatin*, and this is a way of bringing that flavor into a classic apple pie. Because the apples are precooked, they won't shrink during baking and create air pockets inside the pie. I like to serve the pie while it's still warm, either with cream or vanilla ice cream.

SERVES 8

½ cup sugar, plus extra for sprinkling

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

4 large, tart cooking apples, about 3 pounds in total

4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter

1 pound, or 1 recipe, sweet tart pastry (see Chapter 9)

1 extra-large egg yolk, beaten with 2 teaspoons water, for egg wash

Start by preparing the caramelized apple filling. Mix the sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg together. Peel, quarter, and core the apples, then cut into thick chunks. Place in a bowl and sprinkle with the spiced sugar to coat. Fry the apples in two batches: Melt half the butter in a wide, nonstick frying pan, add half the apple chunks, and fry over high heat until golden and caramelized around the edges, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Repeat with the remaining apples and butter. Let cool completely.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Roll out about half of the pastry on a lightly floured surface to about ⅛-inch thickness. Overturn an 8-inch pie pan on top of the pastry and cut out a rough circle slightly bigger than the pan. Line

the pan with the pastry, lightly pressing down to remove any air pockets, then trim off the excess pastry. Roll out the remaining pastry into another circle, again slightly larger than the pan, for the top crust.

Spoon the cooled apples evenly into the pie shell. Brush the rim of the bottom crust with a little water, then drape the top crust over the pie. Press down lightly to seal and trim off the excess pastry. Crimp the edges and brush the top with the egg wash to glaze. Use the tip of a knife to cut a small cross in the center so that steam can escape during cooking. Sprinkle with a little sugar.

Bake until the crust is golden brown and crisp, 35–40 minutes. Let stand for 15–20 minutes before serving.

Summer berry trifle

These pretty little trifles appeal to any age group—it all depends on what style of serving glass you use. The only specification I give is that the glasses must be crystal clear, so they show off the red berries against the cool and pale layers of creamy custard. To add a little crunch, sprinkle the filled glasses with lightly crushed amaretti cookies before you top with the remaining fruit.

SERVES 8

Custard:

2½ cups whole milk
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
scant ½ cup granulated sugar
6 extra-large egg yolks
5 tablespoons cornstarch
⅔ cup heavy cream

Trifle:

5 ounces each strawberries, raspberries, and red currants stripped from stems (about 1 heaped cup each), plus 8 small sprays of red currants on their stems
1 tablespoon crème de cassis
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar, or to taste

Put the milk into a saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add to the milk along with the bean and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Bring to a simmer. Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks, cornstarch, and remaining sugar

together in a bowl. Slowly pour in the hot milk, stirring all the time to prevent the eggs from scrambling. When fully incorporated, rinse out the pan. Strain the custard mixture back into the clean pan and return to low heat. Whisk until the custard thickens—this usually occurs just before simmering point. Transfer to a bowl and let cool, stirring every once in a while to prevent a skin from forming.

Once the custard has cooled, whip the cream into soft peaks and fold into the custard to lighten it. Chill for a few hours, or overnight if preparing in advance.

Cut four attractive strawberries into quarters and set aside with the sprays of red currants. Put the rest of the strawberries, the raspberries, and stripped red currants into a large bowl along with the crème de cassis and confectioners' sugar. Crush the fruit with a potato masher or a large fork to get a compote-like texture.

To assemble the trifles, spoon some custard into eight small dessert glasses, to fill the bottom third. Spoon a layer of fruit into each serving glass, then top with the remaining custard. If you have any left, spoon a little juice from the crushed fruit over the custard, then garnish with the reserved strawberry quarters and red-currant sprays.



Peach, raspberry, and ginger crumble

A little stem ginger lifts the flavors of the fruit in this crumble, which is similar to a fruit crisp. The best way to eat it is warm from the oven, with a generous scoop of cold vanilla or ginger ice cream (see Chapter 7).

SERVES 4–6

Filling:

butter for greasing

8 firm but ripe peaches, about 1¾ pounds in total

8 ounces raspberries (about 2 cups)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons crème de pêche (or confectioners' sugar)

2 pieces of stem ginger in syrup, drained and minced

Crumble topping:

⅓ cup all-purpose flour

pinch of fine sea salt

3 tablespoons butter, diced

scant ½ cup rolled oats

¼ cup Demerara or Turbinado sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ cup slivered almonds or crushed hazelnuts

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly butter a wide 6-cup baking dish and set aside.

Halve the peaches, remove the pits, and cut into wedges. Place in a large bowl and gently toss with the raspberries, lemon juice, crème de pêche, and stem ginger. Spread the fruit evenly in the prepared baking dish and set aside.

To make the crumble topping, put the flour and salt into a bowl and add the diced butter. Rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse bread crumbs. Stir in the oats, sugar, cinnamon, and nuts. Sprinkle the crumble evenly over the peaches and raspberries.

Bake until the topping is golden brown and the fruit underneath is soft, 20–25 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Baked gooseberries with honey and almonds

Tart gooseberries need sugar and a touch of cream to balance out their acidity. This effortless recipe takes 10 or 15 minutes to make, and most of that time is spent trimming the gooseberries. When fresh gooseberries are not available, use thawed frozen gooseberries, or substitute other berries or fruits such as plums or peaches.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces, plus extra for greasing

1¼ pounds gooseberries (about 4 cups)

1–1½ tablespoons sugar

½ cup sliced almonds

clear honey for drizzling

whipped cream for serving

Preheat the oven to 400°F and lightly butter four individual baking dishes. Trim the ends from the gooseberries, then divide among the baking dishes. Sprinkle with a little sugar and scatter the almonds over the top. Drizzle with a little honey. Dot a few small pieces of butter over the almonds and gooseberries.

Bake until the gooseberries are soft and have started to burst, 25–30 minutes. The sliced almonds will be golden brown and caramelized. Remove the baking dishes from the oven and let cool slightly, then serve warm with a dollop of whipped cream.



Fig ice cream

If you make this ice cream using black figs, it comes out a pretty shade of light purple. Creamy and luscious, the ice cream makes the perfect accompaniment to a pecan tart, or simply serve it with a bowl of fresh figs drizzled with honey.

SERVES 8

16 fresh figs in season (or about 8 dried figs)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

finely grated zest of 1 lemon

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy cream

3–4 tablespoons lemon juice

Trim off the stems from the top of each fig, then cut lengthwise into eighths. Put the figs in a saucepan with the sugar, water, and lemon zest. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the liquid has reduced to a syrup and the figs have broken down to a jam texture, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a wide bowl and let cool completely.

To make the ice cream base, put the cooked figs into a blender and pour in the cream and lemon juice to taste. Blitz until smooth. Stop the machine as soon as the mixture starts to thicken and increase in volume. Scrape into an ice-cream maker and churn until almost firm. Scoop into a suitable container and freeze until firm.

Remove the ice cream from the freezer about 10–15 minutes before serving to let it soften a little.

Cinnamon rice pudding with apricot compote

Rice pudding is pure comfort food. I really enjoy a bowl of warm rice pudding in the winter, and it is equally good served chilled in the summer, with fresh fruit compote. The pudding tends to set when cold, so loosen the consistency with a splash of milk or a little extra cream right before serving. Any extra compote would be great with breakfast muesli.

SERVES 6, WITH EXTRA COMPOTE

Rice pudding:

1 cup short-grain rice
2½ cups whole milk
pinch of fine sea salt
½ cup sugar
1 cinnamon stick
1 cup light cream, plus optional extra for serving

Apricot compote:

1 pound ripe apricots
2 tablespoons butter
3–4 tablespoons sugar
2 star anise
1 cinnamon stick

Put the rice, milk, salt, sugar, and cinnamon into a heavy-based saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring once or twice, then turn the heat to very low. Partially cover the pan and slowly simmer until the rice is tender, 45–55 minutes. Remember to stir the pudding frequently or the rice will stick and

burn on the bottom of the pan. Remove the pan from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes, then stir in the cream. Keep warm.

While the rice pudding is cooking, halve and pit the apricots, then roughly chop them. Melt the butter in a pan and add the apricots, sugar, star anise, and cinnamon. Toss over high heat just until the apricots are soft, 3–4 minutes. Pour into a bowl and let cool slightly.

To serve, spoon the warm rice pudding into individual serving bowls or glasses and top each with a generous spoonful of the apricot compote.

Custard tart

A few strips of orange zest lend a subtle fragrance to this custard tart. As it is not overly sweet and is high in calcium-rich dairy, I think it's a good dessert to serve to children. Mine can devour this in minutes.

SERVES 8

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, sweet tart pastry (see Chapter 9)

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups whole milk

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups heavy cream

3 pared strips of orange zest

1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

5 tablespoons sugar

6 extra-large egg yolks

nutmeg for grating

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides of the pan. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Line the tart shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool slightly. Reduce the oven temperature to 300°F.

While the pastry is cooling, prepare the custard. Put the milk, cream, and orange zest into a saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add to the pan with the bean. Bring just to a simmer. Beat the sugar and egg yolks together in a large bowl. As soon as the creamy milk begins to bubble around the edge, slowly trickle it into the egg mixture, stirring. When fully incorporated, strain the mixture and discard the orange zest and vanilla bean.

Trim the edges of the pastry shell level with the rim. Place the pan in the oven, then pull the oven shelf halfway out (the pan should still be level). Pour the custard into the pastry shell until it almost reaches the top, then carefully slide the oven shelf back into the oven. Bake until the custard is set but still has a slight wobble in the center, 30–40 minutes.

Remove from the oven and dust the surface with freshly grated nutmeg. Let cool completely before slicing with a sharp serrated knife for serving.





Lemon meringue tart

I loved lemon meringue pie as a child, but now I'm a little less keen on the texture of the lemon-cornstarch filling. My version uses a rich French-style lemon tart as the base, topping it with a generous pile of pillowy white meringue. Irresistible.

SERVES 6

10 ounces, or about $\frac{2}{3}$ recipe, sweet tart pastry (see Chapter 9)

Lemon filling:

juice of 2 lemons

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

6 extra-large egg yolks

1 cup heavy cream

Meringue:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons superfine sugar

4 extra-large egg whites

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Use it to line an 8-inch-diameter tart pan with a removable bottom. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides of the pan. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line the tart shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil

and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly. Reduce the oven temperature to 275°F.

Whisk together all the ingredients for the filling, taking care not to aerate the mixture too much.

Trim the edges of the pastry shell level with the rim of the pan. Place the pan in the oven, then pull the oven shelf halfway out (the pan should still be level). Pour the filling into the pastry shell, then carefully slide the oven shelf back into the oven. Bake until the filling looks slightly set, about 30 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave the tart inside to cool slowly. It will continue to set as it cools. Take the tart out of the oven only when it has completely cooled, after a few hours or overnight.

For best results, make the meringue 10–15 minutes before you are ready to serve. Preheat the broiler. Toss the sugar in a pan over low heat—you do not want to melt the sugar, just heat it until it is warm to the touch. (The warmth of the sugar helps to stabilize the beaten egg whites.) Beat the egg whites to stiff peaks in a greasefree bowl. Gradually beat in the warm sugar, then continue beating until the meringue has tripled in volume and is firm and glossy.

Spread the meringue over the filling and broil, 4–5 inches from the heat source, until browned around the edges, 2–3 minutes. Alternatively, run a blowtorch over the meringue until it is nicely caramelized. Let cool briefly, then serve.



Bakewell tart

This favorite English tart, named for the town of Bakewell in Derbyshire, has a long history, with similar tarts dating back to medieval times. The best Bakewell tarts are made with homemade strawberry jam. If you use store-bought jam, taste it first and reduce the amount if it is very sweet.

SERVES 10–12

1 pound, or 1 recipe, sweet tart pastry (see Chapter 9)
1¹/₃ cups unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
1 cup plus 6 tablespoons sugar
3 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3¹/₄ cups ground almonds
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3–4 tablespoons strawberry jam
2 tablespoons apricot jam, mixed with 1–2 teaspoons boiling water

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to about ¹/₈-inch thickness. Use it to line a tart pan with a removable bottom that is 9–10 inches in diameter and about 1¹/₂ inches deep. Leave a little excess pastry hanging over the sides of the pan. Let rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Gather up the pastry trimmings and roll out into a rough rectangle. Transfer to a baking sheet. Use a ruler to help you cut the pastry into neat ¹/₂-inch-wide strips. These will be used to decorate the tart. Refrigerate.

Line the tart shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15–20 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and return to the oven to bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool slightly. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

For the filling, beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs and vanilla, then fold in the ground almonds and flour.

Trim the edges of the pastry shell level with the rim of the pan. Spoon a thin layer of strawberry jam over the bottom of the pastry shell, then spread the almond mixture over the jam. Use the pastry strips to create a lattice pattern on top of the filling, trimming off any ends that stick out. Bake until the top is a light golden brown, 35–40 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly. While the tart is still warm, brush the apricot glaze over the top. Let cool completely before slicing and serving.





Poached rhubarb with ginger ice cream

I love pink rhubarb, as long as it has been lightly poached and still retains its shape. Then it needs to be paired with something creamy, and here ginger ice cream does the trick perfectly.

SERVES 4–6

Poached rhubarb:

1 pound rhubarb

1¼ cups sugar

2 cups water

1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

Ginger ice cream:

1 cup whole milk

1 cup heavy cream

1-ounce piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated

6 extra-large egg yolks

7 tablespoons sugar

¼ cup stem ginger in syrup sliced into thin matchsticks (optional)

Trim both the ends from the rhubarb, then cut diagonally into 1-inch lengths. Put the sugar and water into a saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add to the pan along with the bean. Stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat slightly and simmer until the liquid has thickened slightly, 2–3 minutes. Tip in the rhubarb and poach until just tender but the pieces are still holding their shape, 3–5 minutes. Remove the rhubarb with a slotted spoon and put into a bowl.

Boil the poaching liquid until reduced by two-thirds to a syrupy sauce, 8–10 minutes. Pour the sauce over the rhubarb. Let cool completely, then refrigerate. With time, the rhubarb will continue to stain the poaching syrup into a gorgeous pink sauce. The poached rhubarb can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a week.

For the ginger ice cream, put the milk, cream, and grated ginger into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks and sugar together in a large heatproof bowl. When the milk and cream begin to bubble at the sides of the pan, remove from the heat. Slowly trickle the hot liquid into the egg and sugar mixture, stirring. When fully incorporated, strain the mixture into a clean saucepan. Return to a low heat and stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture thickens to a custard that lightly coats the back of the spoon.

Remove from the heat and stir in the stem ginger, if using. Let cool completely, giving the custard a stir every now and then to prevent a skin from forming. Pour into the bowl of an ice-cream maker and churn until almost firm. Transfer to a suitable container and freeze for at least 6 hours or overnight.

Take the ginger ice cream out of the freezer 5–10 minutes before serving to let it soften slightly. Serve neat scoops alongside the poached rhubarb and sauce.





Mixed berry tartlets with vanilla and peach cream

These gorgeous tartlets are great for entertaining and they make fabulous desserts for picnics, too, although you need to take care when packing and transporting the delicate pastry shells. Layer them in between sheets of wax paper and/or paper towels in a sturdy airtight container. If you like, lay out bowls of the vanilla and peach cream and the mixed berries next to the pastry shells and let people assemble the tarts themselves.

SERVES 6, WITH EXTRA VANILLA CREAM

1 pound, or 1 recipe, walnut pastry (see Chapter 9)

1 pound mixed berries, such as blackberries, blueberries, wild strawberries, and raspberries (3–4 cups)
confectioners' sugar for dusting

Vanilla and peach cream:

1 cup whole milk

½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

¼ cup granulated sugar

2½ tablespoons cornstarch

3 extra-large egg yolks

1 cup heavy cream

1–2 tablespoons crème de pêche, to taste

Have ready six 4-inch-diameter tartlet pans with removable bases. Roll the pastry on a lightly floured surface into a thick log. Divide the log into six equal pieces. Shape each piece into a round ball, flatten it with the palm of your hand, and roll out into a thin circle. Gently press the dough into a tartlet pan and trim off the excess pastry. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Put the tart shells on a baking sheet and let rest in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.

To make the vanilla cream, put the milk in a saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add to the milk along with the bean and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Place the saucepan over high heat and scald the milk. Meanwhile, mix together the remaining sugar and the cornstarch in a large bowl, then beat in the egg yolks until the mixture is smooth.

When bubbles start appearing around the edge of the pan, remove from the heat and gradually trickle the hot milk into the egg mixture, stirring. When all the milk has been added, rinse out the pan. Strain the custard mixture through a fine sieve into the clean pan and return to the heat. Slowly stir over low heat for a few minutes until thickened. Pour into a large, clean bowl (for extra smoothness, strain the custard through a sieve into the bowl). Let cool, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line each tartlet shell with foil and fill with pie weights. Place the pans on a baking sheet and bake for 10–12 minutes. Remove the pie weights and foil and return to the oven to finish baking, about 5 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes, then unmold the pastry cases and cool on a wire rack.

Whip the cream to soft peaks. Beat the cooled vanilla custard slightly to loosen it, then fold in the cream and the crème de pêche to taste. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Pipe or spoon the vanilla cream into each pastry shell, top with mixed fresh berries, and dust with a little confectioners' sugar.

Blackberry sorbet with shortbread fingers

This blackberry sorbet takes minutes to make: Lightly poach blackberries in syrup, purée, strain, cool, and churn. While waiting for the sorbet to freeze, you can use the time to make shortbread fingers. Leftover shortbread will keep for a couple of weeks in an airtight container.

SERVES 6–8, WITH EXTRA SHORTBREAD FINGERS

Blackberry sorbet:

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 pound blackberries (about 3 heaped cups)
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Shortbread fingers:

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
scant ½ cup sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
1 extra-large egg, beaten
1⅔ cups all-purpose flour, sifted with ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

First, make the sorbet. Put the sugar and water in a small saucepan and stir over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Turn up the heat slightly and simmer for a few minutes. Tip in the blackberries and simmer for 2–3 minutes longer.

Transfer the blackberries and syrup to a blender and blitz until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve to remove the seeds. Stir in the lemon juice and

let cool completely. If you have time, chill the mixture for about an hour. Put the sorbet mixture into the bowl of an ice-cream maker and churn until almost firm. Transfer to a suitable container and freeze until solid.

For the shortbread, beat the butter and sugar in an electric mixer until smooth and creamy, then gradually beat in the egg. Turn the machine to the lowest setting and mix in the flour, a spoonful at a time, until the dough just comes together. Press the dough together into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to let it firm up.

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Roll out the dough to ¼-inch thickness. Trim the edges to form a neat rectangle. With the help of a rolling pin, transfer the dough to a baking sheet. Mark out ¾-inch by 3¼-inch rectangles using a clean ruler and a long knife. Prick each rectangle a few times with a fork and sprinkle with a little sugar.

Bake until the shortbread is a pale golden color, 20–25 minutes. Cool on the sheet for 30 seconds, then cut along the scored lines to separate the fingers. Place on a wire rack to cool completely. Keep in an airtight container until ready to serve.

Remove the sorbet from the freezer 5–10 minutes before serving to let it soften slightly. Scoop into chilled serving glasses and serve with the shortbread fingers.



chocolate and coffee

When I worked in Paris, as a humble commis chef at Guy Savoy, helping out in the pastry section, I took every opportunity to improve my pastry-, chocolate-, and cake-making skills. To begin with, I got the simpler tasks: rolling hundreds of handmade chocolate truffles to serve with teas and coffees, for example. After several months of proving my aptitude and determination, I was finally allowed to make fantastic desserts on my own, many of which were exquisite chocolate creations.

Baking with chocolate is similar to cooking with wine. You get out what you put in. It always pays to use good-quality chocolate with a high percentage of cocoa solids—for bittersweet chocolate this should be between 65 and 72 percent—particularly if chocolate is the dominant flavor in a dessert. Even if a recipe calls for semisweet or milk chocolate, spend a little more on buying the best quality.

Chocolate swirl cheesecake
Double chocolate parfait
Chocolate chip pancakes with orange-brandy sauce
Sticky date and chocolate pudding
Chocolate and coffee pots
Black Forest cake
Dark chocolate marquise
Coffee and almond crunch cake
Chocolate roulade with chocolate-chestnut cream



Chocolate swirl cheesecake

This New York-style cheesecake is rich and creamy, and made a little more decadent with swirls of melted dark chocolate. To cut through the richness, serve with a fresh fruit compote—blueberry or a mixture of berries, or other soft, tart fruit.

SERVES 8–10

1½ cups crushed graham crackers

3 tablespoons ground toasted almonds

4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted

3 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), roughly chopped

¾ cup sugar

1 cup sour cream

1¼ pounds cream cheese (about 2¾ cups)

2 extra-large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 325°F and butter a 9-inch-diameter springform cake pan. Use a food processor to mix the graham crackers with the almonds. Add the melted butter and pulse until the mixture comes together. Tip the mixture into the pan and press down with a spatula to form an even crust. Bake in the preheated oven until golden, 10–15 minutes.

Remove from the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 275°F.

Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Stir until the chocolate is smooth, then remove from the heat.

In a large mixing bowl, beat together the rest of the ingredients using a hand-held electric mixer. Pour the mixture into the cake pan and tap the pan gently to level the mixture and remove any large air bubbles. Swirl the melted chocolate into the filling.

Bake until the filling is set around the sides but still wobbly in the center when you gently shake the pan, about 30 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave the cheesecake inside to cool slowly, preferably overnight. The filling will continue to set as it cools, and taking it out of the oven too soon may cause it to crack.

Remove the cheesecake from the springform pan and slide onto a serving plate. Best served chilled.

Double chocolate parfait

Rich and luscious, this French-style parfait will tempt any chocolate-lover. As I hardly need to tell you, be sure to use top-quality chocolate for both layers.

SERVES 8

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), chopped

5 ounces semisweet (or milk) chocolate, chopped

1¼ cups double cream, lightly whipped

2 cups raspberries for serving (optional)

Mousse base:

¾ cup sugar

½ cup water

5 extra-large egg yolks

First, prepare the mousse base: Put the sugar and water in a small saucepan and stir over low heat to dissolve, then increase the heat and bring to a boil. Boil until the liquid is thick and syrupy, 7–10 minutes. The temperature should reach about 230°F on a candy thermometer (the thread stage).

While the sugar syrup is boiling, beat the egg yolks until smooth and fluffy. Carefully and slowly trickle in the hot sugar syrup, beating vigorously until the mixture is thick and glossy and has tripled in volume. Continue to beat until the mixture has cooled and the sides of the bowl no longer feel hot, about 5 minutes longer. Set aside.

Put the bittersweet and semisweet chocolates into separate large heatproof bowls. Melt one at a time, setting the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

Divide the mousse base between the two bowls of melted chocolate and fold through until evenly combined. Finally, fold half the whipped cream into each chocolate base.

Line a large loaf pan or terrine with plastic wrap so that plenty of wrap hangs over the sides. Spread the bittersweet chocolate mousse evenly over the bottom of the pan, filling in the corners. Making sure the pan is level, freeze until firm, about 2 hours. In the meantime, keep the semisweet chocolate mousse in the refrigerator.

Remove the pan from the freezer and spread the semisweet chocolate mixture on top of the frozen bittersweet mixture to fill the pan. Fold the excess wrap over the top to cover and freeze for at least 8 hours or overnight.

Remove the parfait from the freezer 5–10 minutes before serving to let it soften. Unmold onto a clean cutting board and peel off the plastic wrap. Cut into thick slices using a warm knife. Serve each slice with a scattering of raspberries, if you wish.





Chocolate chip pancakes with orange-brandy sauce

For even more luxury, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream to each serving of warm pancakes and brandy sauce. Or, for a special breakfast treat on a child's birthday, serve the pancakes with maple syrup instead of brandy sauce.

SERVES 5–6

Chocolate chip pancakes:

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of fine sea salt
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup buttermilk
2 extra-large eggs, separated
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water
butter for frying
 $\frac{1}{2}$ heaped cup semisweet chocolate chips

Orange-brandy sauce:

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light cream
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon brandy or Grand Marnier/Cointreau
2 tablespoons orange juice
orange sections for garnish (optional)

To make the pancake batter, sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a large mixing bowl and make a well in the middle. In another bowl, whisk

the buttermilk, egg yolks, and water together, then pour into the well. Gradually incorporate the flour into the liquid ingredients to make a smooth batter. Beat the egg whites to firm peaks, then fold into the batter.

Cook the pancakes in batches of two or three: Heat a wide, nonstick frying pan with a small piece of butter. Pour a small ladleful of batter into the pan for each pancake, then drop a few chocolate chips over the top of each. Fry until golden brown underneath, about 1 minute, then flip over and cook the other side for 45–60 seconds longer. The pancakes should puff up as they cook. Keep them warm in a low oven while you cook the rest, adding more butter to the pan as needed.

For the sauce, combine the chocolate, cream, and sugar in a small saucepan. Set the pan over low heat and stir until the chocolate and sugar have melted and the sauce is smooth. Stir in the brandy and orange juice, then pour into a warm pitcher.

Pile the pancakes on warm plates and drizzle the sauce over them. Garnish with orange sections, if you wish.

Sticky date and chocolate pudding

I can't resist a pudding like this. For me, it is the perfect ending to a meal on a cold, wintry day. It pays to use Medjool dates here, as their rich, sweet flavor adds depth to the pudding.

SERVES 8

Pudding:

7 ounces Medjool dates, pitted and chopped (about 1 heaped cup)

scant 1 cup packed dark brown sugar

1 cup water

7 tablespoons lightly salted butter, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon cooled espresso or strong black coffee

3 extra-large eggs

1 cup all-purpose flour

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

Sauce:

½ cup packed dark brown sugar

5 tablespoons lightly salted butter

1 cup heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter eight 6-ounce ramekins or other individual molds and line the bottom of each with a disk of buttered

parchment paper (or use an 8-inch square cake pan to make one large pudding).

Put the dates, sugar, and water in a saucepan and simmer gently until the sugar has dissolved and the dates are very soft, about 10 minutes. Let cool, then blend in a food processor until smooth. Add the butter, vanilla, espresso, and eggs and blitz again until well blended. Scrape the mixture into a large mixing bowl. In two batches, sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and baking powder into the bowl and fold into the wet mixture. Divide among the prepared molds. Bake for 20–25 minutes (or 40–50 minutes if using a cake pan): The puddings are ready when a skewer inserted into the center emerges fairly clean.

Put all the sauce ingredients into a saucepan and simmer, stirring frequently, until the sauce is smooth, 2–3 minutes. Keep warm, stirring every once in a while to prevent a skin from forming on top.

When the puddings are just cool enough to handle, but still warm, run a small knife around them and unmold onto individual serving plates (if baked in a cake pan, cut into squares for serving). Peel off the parchment disk. Pour a generous drizzle of warm sauce over each pudding and serve immediately.



Chocolate and coffee pots

These chocolate and coffee custards are rich and meltingly smooth, and as good on the eye as they are on the palate. Because the custards are gently baked in a water bath, you can set them in pretty teacups, as I have done, or use regular ramekins for a simpler presentation.

SERVES 4

1 cup heavy cream

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), chopped

¼ cup light cream

2 extra-large egg yolks

2½ tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons cooled espresso or strong black coffee

4 tablespoons crème fraîche for serving (optional)

chocolate shavings for garnish (optional)

Preheat the oven to 325°F. In a medium saucepan, scald the heavy cream, then add the chocolate and stir until the chocolate has melted and the mixture is smooth. Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the light cream, and let cool.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale and thick enough to fall in a lazy ribbon from the beaters when they are lifted out, about 5 minutes. Fold in the cooled chocolate cream, followed by the espresso.

Divide the mixture among four 4- to 5-ounce teacups, ramekins, or other individual molds. Place the filled cups in a roasting pan. Set the pan on the

bottom shelf of the oven and pull out the shelf halfway while keeping the pan level. Carefully pour enough boiling water into the pan to come halfway up the sides of the molds. Carefully push the shelf back into the oven.

Bake until the custards are just set at the edges but still slightly soft in the center, 20–25 minutes. Remove the molds from the water bath and let cool completely. Chill for a few hours or overnight.

Remove from the refrigerator 10–15 minutes before serving, garnished with a neat little dollop of crème fraîche and some chocolate shavings, if you like.





Black Forest cake

Dark chocolate and cherries will always be a winning combination. The chocolate sponge cake in this recipe has just the right texture for absorbing a drizzle of kirsch, which keeps it delectably moist. Fresh stemmed cherries are the perfect garnish for the assembled cake, but if they're not available, use a large jar of marinated cherries in kirsch.

SERVES 8

Chocolate sponge cake:

1 cup cake flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
pinch of fine sea salt
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
5 extra-large eggs, separated
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons cooled espresso or strong black coffee
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), melted in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water

Filling and topping:

1 pound ripe cherries
5 tablespoons granulated sugar
5 tablespoons kirsch or cherry brandy
 $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups heavy cream
1–2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar, to taste
4–5 tablespoons good-quality cherry preserves
grated chocolate for garnish

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 9-inch-diameter cake pan, then line the bottom with a disk of buttered parchment paper. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and cocoa powder together and set aside. In a large, greasefree bowl, beat the egg whites to firm peaks. In another mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolks one at a time, then fold in the espresso, followed by the melted chocolate.

In several batches, fold the sifted flour mixture and the beaten egg whites alternately into the chocolate mixture. Spread the batter in the prepared pan and level with a spatula. Bake until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake emerges clean, 40–50 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then unmold onto a wire rack. Peel off the parchment.

Remove the stems and pits from three-quarters of the cherries. Put all the cherries, the sugar, and kirsch in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Simmer until the cherries are just soft, giving them an occasional stir. Tip the cherries and kirsch syrup into a bowl and let cool completely. Meanwhile, whip the cream with the confectioners' sugar to soft peaks.

Using a long, sharp knife, cut the cake horizontally into two layers. Drizzle the kirsch syrup from the cherries over the layers to moisten. Place the bottom layer on a cake plate and spread half of the whipped cream on top. Arrange the stemmed and pitted cherries over the cream, then spoon a layer of cherry preserves over the cherries. Put the upper cake layer in place and spread the remaining cream on top. Sprinkle with a little grated chocolate and garnish with the whole stemmed cherries. This cake is best served on the day it is made.





Dark chocolate marquise

There's no denying that this is a seriously rich and indulgent dessert. When you take a bite, the velvety smooth mousse melts in your mouth. It requires a bit of patience and persistence to make—you need to beat separated eggs and cream individually, then fold together with melted bittersweet chocolate. I've set the mousse on top of a thin chocolate sponge cake, which you could replace with a simple cheesecake base (see Chapter 8).

SERVES 12

Sponge cake base:

3 large eggs, separated
6 tablespoons superfine sugar
3½ tablespoons cornstarch
3½ tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
¼ cup cake flour

Rich mousse topping:

10 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), roughly chopped
2 tablespoons Grand Marnier/Cointreau, plus extra for drizzling
2 tablespoons orange juice
3 extra-large eggs
2½ tablespoons granulated sugar
3 tablespoons clear honey
1¼ cups heavy cream
unsweetened cocoa powder for dusting

First, make the sponge cake. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with a large sheet of parchment paper. Beat the egg whites in a large mixing bowl until just firm. Gradually beat in the sugar to make a stiff meringue. Beat the egg yolks in another bowl until light and fluffy, then fold into the meringue.

Sift the cornstarch, cocoa powder, and flour together over the mixture and fold through. Spread the cake batter over the lined baking sheet into a large round 10–12 inches in diameter and an even thickness all over. Don't worry if it is not a perfect circle. Bake until set and springy when gently pressed, 7–8 minutes. Invert onto a wire rack to cool and peel off the parchment.

For the mousse topping, melt the chocolate in a large heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Remove the bowl from the heat and let cool slightly, then stir in the Grand Marnier and orange juice. Leave the pan of water simmering over very low heat.

Using a hand-held electric mixer, beat the eggs in a large heatproof bowl until pale and fluffy. Add the sugar and honey. Set the bowl over the pan of barely simmering water and beat until the mixture is very light and has more than tripled in volume, 5–10 minutes. Remove the bowl from the pan and continue to beat until the mixture has cooled slightly.

Using the same beaters, whip the cream to soft peaks. Fold into the beaten egg mixture. Finally, fold in the melted chocolate until evenly incorporated.

Use a 10-inch-diameter springform cake pan as a guide to cut out a neat circle from the sponge cake, then use this to line the bottom of the pan. Drizzle a few tablespoons of Grand Marnier over the base, then spread the chocolate mousse mixture on top. Level the top with a spatula. Refrigerate until set, at least 6 hours.

Before serving, dust the top with cocoa powder, then unmold and cut into individual slices using a warm knife.

Coffee and almond crunch cake

For me, this is the definitive cake to have with coffee or tea. It is all at once tender, moist, and crunchy. It will keep well for several days in a cool part of the kitchen. Some people like a dollop of lightly sweetened mascarpone on the side, although I think it's perfect on its own.

SERVES 6–8

Cake:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup ($1\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) unsalted butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract
1 heaped cup ground almonds
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooled espresso or strong black coffee
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup self-rising flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
confectioners' sugar for dusting

Crunch topping:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) cold unsalted butter, diced

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Butter the bottom and sides of a deep 8-inch-diameter cake pan with a removable bottom. For the crunch topping, mix the flour and sugar in a bowl and rub in the butter until it resembles coarse crumbs. Set aside.

Using a mixer, cream the butter and sugar in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, a little at a time, until fully incorporated. Add the almond extract and mix well. Fold in the ground almonds, followed by half the espresso. Sift in the flour and baking powder together and fold this through the mixture. Finally, fold in the remaining espresso.

Spread the batter in the cake pan and level with a spatula. Bake for 30 minutes. Sprinkle the crunch topping evenly over the top, then continue baking until the top is golden brown and a skewer inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, 20–30 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before unmolding onto a wire rack. Peel away the parchment. When completely cooled, dust with confectioners' sugar, then cut into slices to serve.



Chocolate roulade with chocolate-chestnut cream

The creamy chestnut filling goes perfectly with the light chocolate sponge cake in this dessert. You can dress it up with a chocolate frosting, or dust with confectioners' sugar and decorate with chocolate leaves.

SERVES 8–10

Chocolate sponge cake:

confectioners' sugar for dusting

unsweetened cocoa powder for dusting

5 extra-large egg whites

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup superfine sugar

3 tablespoons self-rising flour

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), melted in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water

3 tablespoons cooled espresso or strong black coffee

Filling:

1 cup sweetened chestnut purée

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (minimum 65% cocoa solids), melted in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water

1 cup heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a jelly-roll pan that is about 10 by 14 inches, then line it with parchment paper, leaving the edges of the paper sticking up around the sides. Dust evenly with a mixture of confectioners' sugar and cocoa powder (about 1 tablespoon of each).

Beat the egg whites to stiff peaks in a large, greasefree bowl. Gradually beat in the superfine sugar, a tablespoon at a time, until the meringue is in firm peaks again. Sift the flour over the meringue and gently fold through with a large metal spoon. Mix the melted chocolate with the espresso, then fold this through the meringue to combine. Spread the batter in the lined pan using a spatula to even out the surface. Bake until the top is set and the sponge is slightly springy when gently pressed, 15–20 minutes. Pull the parchment and slide the cake onto a wire rack to cool slightly. Cover with a damp dish towel and let cool completely.

Lay a sheet of parchment or wax paper, larger than the sponge, on the work surface. Sift a little confectioners' sugar and cocoa powder over the paper. Invert the sponge on top, then peel off the parchment lining.

Mix together the chestnut purée and melted chocolate until smooth. Whip the cream until thick, then fold into the chocolate-chestnut mixture. Spread the filling over the chocolate sponge, leaving a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch border clear all around the edge.

Starting at one long edge, roll up the sponge to form a neat log, using the parchment paper to help you. Making sure the join is underneath, wrap the paper around the roulade, then refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

If necessary, gently roll the roulade on the work surface to even out the shape, then unwrap and slide onto a cake plate. If you like, dust with confectioners' sugar before slicing and serving.



basics

A good stock is the basis for many a successful dish. Making your own gives you more control over the finished dish, and allows you to make good use of trimmings and capture flavors that would otherwise be wasted. Stocks keep well in the freezer. Another homemade treat is mayonnaise: It tastes brilliant and is easy and quick—abandon any idea you may have that making it is tricky. Making pastry is a little trickier, but it gets easier with practice. The only pastry I rarely make myself is puff pastry; I usually buy it from a good source. All the other pastries, however, can be put together with little fuss, and the results always justify the small amount of work put in. This is my collection of essential basic recipes to enhance the dishes in this book.

Mayonnaise

Chicken stock & Clear chicken stock

Vegetable stock

Beef stock

Lamb stock

Fish stock

Basic short pastry

Sweet tart pastry

Sweet walnut pastry & Walnut and Parmesan pastry

Mayonnaise

Makes about 2½ cups

4 extra-large egg yolks
2 teaspoons white-wine vinegar
2 teaspoons English mustard
2½ cups peanut oil (or light olive oil)
1–2 tablespoons cold water

Put the egg yolks, vinegar, mustard, and some salt and pepper into a food processor and blitz until the mixture is very thick and creamy. With the motor running, slowly trickle in the oil in a steady stream. Add the water and blitz to help stabilize the emulsion. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Will keep, in a covered jar in the refrigerator, for 3 days.

Chicken stock

Makes about 6 cups

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large carrot, roughly chopped
1 onion, roughly chopped
2 celery ribs, roughly chopped
1 leek, sliced
1 bay leaf
1 sprig of fresh thyme
3 garlic cloves, peeled
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2¼ pounds raw chicken bones (roasted, if making brown chicken stock)

Heat the olive oil in a large stockpot and add the vegetables, herbs, and garlic. Sauté over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are golden. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute longer. Add the chicken bones, then pour in enough cold water to cover, about 8 cups. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, skimming off any scum that rises to the surface. Reduce the heat and let simmer gently for 1 hour.

Let the stock stand for a few minutes to cool slightly and allow the ingredients to settle before straining through a fine sieve. Cool and refrigerate, or freeze in convenient portions. Use up fresh stock within 5 days or keep frozen for up to 3 months.

Clear chicken stock

Make the stock as above, strain, and let cool completely. Blend 1 cup ground chicken and 3 egg whites together in a food processor. Whisk the mixture into the stock and place over high heat. Keep whisking until the mixture comes to a boil. A foamy layer of impurities will float to the surface of the stock and form a crust. As soon as the liquid begins to creep up the sides of the pan, remove the pan from the heat. Carefully pour the stock through a cheesecloth-lined sieve set over a large pot and let the liquid drip through. To keep the stock clear, do not press down on the crust or squeeze the cheesecloth. Season to taste. Reheat the stock before serving.

Vegetable stock

Makes about 6 cups

3 onions, roughly chopped
1 leek, roughly chopped
2 celery ribs, roughly chopped
6 carrots, roughly chopped
1 head of garlic, split horizontally
1 teaspoon white peppercorns
1 bay leaf

few sprigs of fresh thyme, basil, tarragon, cilantro, and parsley, tied together
1 cup dry white wine

Put the vegetables, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaf in a large stockpot and pour in cold water to cover, about 8 cups. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer and let cook gently for 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the bundle of herbs, white wine, and a little seasoning. Give the stock a stir and let cool completely.

If you have time, chill the stock overnight before straining through a fine sieve. Keep refrigerated and use within 5 days, or freeze the stock in convenient portions for up to 3 months.

Beef stock

Makes about 6 cups

3½ pounds beef or veal marrowbones, chopped into 2-inch pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
2 onions, roughly chopped
2 carrots, roughly chopped
2 celery ribs, roughly chopped
1 large fennel bulb, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
4 ounces button mushrooms
1 bay leaf
sprig of fresh thyme
1 teaspoon black peppercorns

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread the bones in a large roasting pan and toss with a little olive oil to coat. Roast until evenly browned, about 1 hour, turning them over halfway.

Heat the oil in a large stockpot and add the vegetables. Cook over high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown. Add the tomato paste and fry for 2 minutes longer. Add the browned bones to the pot and pour in water to cover, about 8–10 cups. Bring to a simmer, skimming off the froth and scum that rise to the surface.

Add the mushrooms, bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns. Simmer the stock for 6–8 hours until you are satisfied with the flavor. Let stand for a few minutes before straining through a fine sieve. Let cool, then refrigerate, or freeze in convenient portions. Use fresh stock within 5 days or keep frozen for up to 3 months.





Lamb stock

Makes about 5 cups

- 2¼ pounds lamb rib or neck bones**
- 2–3 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- 1 onion, roughly chopped**
- 2 carrots, roughly chopped**
- 1 celery rib, roughly chopped**
- ½ head of garlic, cut horizontally**
- ½ tablespoon tomato paste**
- ⅓ cup dry white wine**
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns**
- 1 bay leaf**
- few sprigs of fresh thyme and flat-leaf parsley**

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread the bones in a large roasting pan and toss with a little olive oil to coat. Roast until evenly browned, 45–60 minutes, turning them over halfway.

Heat the oil in a large stockpot and add the vegetables and garlic. Cook over high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown. Add the tomato paste and fry for 2 minutes longer. Add the wine and let it boil until reduced by half. Add the browned bones to the pot. Pour in water to cover, about 8 cups. Bring to a simmer, skimming off the froth and scum that rise to the surface.

Add the peppercorns and herbs. Simmer the stock for 4–6 hours until you are happy with the flavor. Take the pot off the heat and let stand for a few minutes before straining through a fine sieve. Let cool, then refrigerate, or freeze in convenient portions. Use fresh stock within 5 days or keep frozen for up to 3 months.

Fish stock

Makes about 4 cups

2¼ pounds white fish bones and trimmings

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small onion, roughly chopped

½ celery rib, roughly chopped

1 small fennel bulb, roughly chopped

1 small leek, sliced

⅓ cup dry white wine

If using fish heads, cut out the eyes and gills and remove any traces of blood. Heat the olive oil in a stockpot and add the vegetables and a little salt and pepper. Stir over medium heat until the vegetables begin to soften but not brown, 3–4 minutes. Add the fish bones and trimmings, the wine, and

enough cold water to cover, about 4–5 cups. Bring to a boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool.

Ladle the stock into a fine sieve to strain. Refrigerate and use within 2 days, or freeze in convenient portions for up to 3 months.

Basic short pastry

Makes about 1 pound

1²/₃ cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, diced

4–6 tablespoons ice water

Place the flour, salt, and butter in a food processor. Blitz until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, about 10 seconds. Tip into a mixing bowl. Add 4 tablespoons of water and stir with a table knife until the dough just comes together. If it seems too dry, add 1–2 tablespoons more water. (Try not to make the dough too wet, because this results in a crumbly pastry.) Lightly knead the dough into a smooth ball, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before using.

Sweet tart pastry

Makes about 1 pound

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

7 tablespoons sugar

1 extra-large egg

1¾ cups all-purpose flour

Place the butter and sugar in a food processor and blitz until just combined. Add the egg and blitz for 30 seconds. Tip in the flour and process for a few seconds until the dough just comes together. (Be careful not to over-

process, or the dough will become tough.) Add a tablespoon of cold water if the dough seems too dry. Knead lightly on a floured surface and shape into a flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes before using.

Sweet walnut pastry

Makes about 1 pound

1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 cup finely ground walnuts

½ cup sugar

7 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, diced

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1–2 tablespoons whole milk

Put the flour, walnuts, and sugar into a food processor and pulse for a few seconds to mix. Add the cold butter and blitz into fine crumbs. Tip in the egg and pulse until the mixture comes together, adding a little milk, as necessary, to form a dough. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes before using.

Walnut and Parmesan pastry

Replace the sugar with scant ¼ cup finely grated Parmesan and a pinch of fine sea salt.

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